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ABSTRACT

Outstanding elementary school teachers (N=24) were interviewed about their attitudes, values, and perceptions of themselves and their work. Question topics were: (1) influences on the decision to become a teacher; (2) student teaching experience; (3) special pride in incidents or events; (4) effective teaching approaches or techniques; (5) teacher's role in maintaining discipline; (6) personal assessment of strengths and weaknesses; (7) perception of students' opinion on self (teacher being interviewed); (8) balance between personal and professional life; (9) leisure activities; (10) stressful situations; (11) dealing with stress; (12) support from family and colleagues; (13) sense of being appreciated by others; (14) desirable traits in school administrators; (15) characteristics of the ideal school; (16) validity of career choice; (17) characteristics of outstanding teachers; and (18) how to make teaching a more highly respected profession. Selected responses are presented in narrative form with illustrative quotations. Appendixes include the interview questionnaire, criteria for identifying outstanding teachers, and profile information. Characteristics of outstanding teachers and administrators are listed. (JD)

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Technical Report No. 1

PERCEPTIONS OF OUTSTANDING ELEMENTARY TEACHERS ABOUT THEMSELVES AND THEIR PROFESSION

by

Jean L. Easterly
Associate Professor

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SP 023 498

Dedicated to the twenty-four

elementary teachers

who shared

their ideas

their joys

their concerns

their feelings

and

their trust.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This chapter will describe the context and rationale for research on outstanding teachers. The methodology used in the pilot study will be described as well as the methodology used for the final study. Profile information about the teachers will be presented.

Context

Developmental stage theory has permeated the literature of teaching for many years. Through the eyes of Kohlberg (1975), Piaget (1970) and others, the stages of development have been described and curricular implications drawn. Recently, there has been a shift away from the exclusive emphasis on children to an expansion which includes the entire spectrum of a person's life (Sheehy, 1974 and Levinson, 1978).

Building upon this shift, Watts (1982) has posed a stage development theory for teachers --- one which results in the slow accumulation of learning which causes changes.

> To see growth in spurts, stairs, degrees, ladders, may be a Western phenomenon.... It may be that the labeling of stages reveals the role of noticer rather than the moment of change (Watts, 1982, p. 4).

Watts suggests three stages of development --- the survival, middle and mastery stages. Not surprisingly, there is some overlapping of stages and always the possibility of "backtracking" to an earlier stage.

The survival stage begins sometime during student teaching and usually continues well into the first year of teaching. Some teachers never get beyond this stage while others return to it as a result of such events as reassignment to different grade levels or subject areas. During this stage teachers are struggling with problems of their own

competence. Often these problems include classroom management and anxieties about other's perceptions of their teaching.

Between the survival and mastery stages is the middle stage. In an earlier paper Watts (1980, p. 5) described the middle stage as characterized by "... an increasing sense of comfort ... (and) more attention to child-centered rather than teacher-centered activity...." It may also be helpful to think of the middle stage as between two ends of a continuum or spectrum.

In some ways the mastery stage is even more difficult and elusive to define than the others. While it may be safe to say that we have all known master teachers, each is so very different from the other (Easterly, Allen and Williston, 1980). Watts (1982, p. 7) has described the master teacher as one who "... is working smoothly within the context of the school and of his/her own personality."

> Probably one of the distinguishing marks of a master teacher is an unwillingness to stop growing, examining, and messing around with the job at hand (Watts, 1982, p. 7).

Fessler, Burke and Christensen (1983) have characterized teachers in this stage of development as enthusiastic and growing. They have concluded that job satisfaction is a key ingredient of this stage.

Rationale

Although other professions have ways of identifying and rewarding their most able people, teaching does not have many vehicles for that purpose. Indeed, there are forces at work which strongly oppose the identification and recognition of individual effort and superior competence. While the mastery stage of development may be a useful concept, it is not reflected in the mainstream of educational practice.

This study further explores the concept of mastery and provides a knowledge base which can be used in building systemmatic career ladders for teachers. From information gathered in this study, new ways can be designed for recognizing and utilizing the talents of our most outstanding teachers. Results of this study will give educators and lay people an opportunity to examine what highly respected teachers think and feel about themselves, their work, their play, their interactions with others and the profession as a whole. To explore with teachers their values, beliefs, past experiences and plans for the future is a venture which, once documented, can be shared with the profession at large as well as with potential teachers in the larger national community. For beginning teachers the study provides twenty-four distinctive and exemplary models. In short, the study will contribute data toward an organized body of information about the lives of outstanding contemporary teachers.

Pilot Study

The first step in the exploration of the mastery stage of teaching was the development of a list of questions which could be used during an interview. This beginning step was facilitated by the assistance of graduate students (teachers) enrolled in their last master's level practicum class.

A pool of questions was drawn from sample interview questions reflecting the professional experiences of graduate students, formal interview processes, and brainstorming sessions held during class. The pool included more than fifty questions. A number of questions were culled as too leading, redundant, nonessential or inappropriate. From the original pool twenty-five questions were eventually selected for use in

the pilot study.

After the twenty-five questions were identified, graduate students designed a set of criteria to be used in the identification of outstanding teachers. The process of developing the criteria was similar to the process used in designing the interview questions.

Once the design of the interview questions and the criteria for selecting outstanding teachers were completed, the pilot study was ready to begin. Each of the graduate students invited to class one teacher whom they considered to be outstanding. Criteria used for selecting the teachers had already been designed and included:

1. conveys enthusiasm to others
2. has a positive attitude toward his or her profession
3. is a continual learner.

For a complete list of the criteria used in the study, see Appendix B.

During class interviews, the order of the questions varied and the interviewers (graduate students) were allowed to ask clarifying or elaborative questions. This was rarely necessary since the invited teachers were quite comfortable and fluent.

Prior to the interviews, some of the graduate students were concerned that the invited teachers would feel uneasy if tape recorders were used. Therefore, notes were taken of the most important points.

After each interview, the invited teachers were asked for their reactions. Some reported that they were surprised at being asked to come in while others felt very honored. Most indicated that they got completely "wrapped up in the interview process" and almost "forgot about the others".

Based on the interviews and several post-interview analysis sessions, several questions were deleted, others were modified and two new items were added. A total of eighteen questions was identified for use in the study (see Appendix A). The order of the questions was established and the pilot study was completed.

The Study

The first step in the interviewing process was to seek cooperation of the central administration in two school districts having a combined total of twenty-eight elementary schools. The school districts contain diverse populations which vary across the total socioeconomic continuum. In addition, the communities and the teachers who serve them offer a richness and diversity of ethnic backgrounds.

Principals were asked to distribute letters describing the project to their staffs. The interviewer (formerly the instructor of the practicum) came to faculty meetings and described the intent of the study. Criteria for selecting teachers were distributed (see Appendix B). Using these criteria, each teacher was asked to list one, two, three or possibly more teachers on the staff who would best meet all of the criteria of an outstanding teacher.

Following each meeting, the interviewer privately tallied the results and then contacted the teacher or teachers selected. These contacts were made via telephone to the homes of the teachers. In that way complete privacy could be assured.

Interviews took place in the teacher's home or the interviewer's office. In each case, the order of the questions was the same. The interviewer was limited to short encouraging statements as well as clarifying

and elaborative questions. All interactions were recorded on tape and sessions varied from forty-five minutes to two hours in length. Each tape was then transcribed by a secretary specially hired for the project and then double-checked by a graduate assistant and the interviewer. Completed transcriptions were sent to teachers who were asked to edit their own interviews. Teachers responded by adding clarifying statements and, in ten cases, asking that portions be deleted.

Not all the schools were willing to be involved in the study. For example, one principal and two teachers were concerned about a potential negative impact on those teachers not chosen. They felt that, if the selected teachers told anyone else on the staff, then those not chosen might suffer some loss of positive self esteem as a result. Thus, they chose not to be a part of the study. In total, eighteen elementary schools participated.

From these schools twenty-nine teachers were selected by their peers as outstanding. However, five of the teachers were not able or willing to grant interviews.

Profile Information

After each interview, individual teachers were asked to fill out a sheet entitled, "Profile Information" (see Appendix C). The twenty-four elementary teachers selected for this study were all female. Grade levels ranged from kindergarten through sixth grade. Four teachers taught more than one grade level, two teachers were in Special Education and one was in Reading. Eight teachers had taken graduate courses while eleven had their master's degrees and five had taken post-master's work.

Years of experience ranged widely. Whereas one teacher had only

five to nine years of experience, eight had ten to fourteen years and twelve had fifteen to nineteen years. One had twenty to twenty-four years and two had between twenty-five and twenty-nine years of experience.

As might be expected, ages varied considerably. Three were in the thirty-one to thirty-five age range, eight were in the thirty-six to forty range. Seven teachers were forty-one to forty-five, four were in the forty-six to fifty age range and two were fifty-one to fifty-five years of age.

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CHAPTER TWO: RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Results of the study will be presented on a question by question basis. Within each question categories have been delineated to highlight and give structure to responses of the teachers.

It may be helpful to view these results as one might view art treasures in a museum. First of all, the art must be collected from many different places. Certainly, much care must be taken during the selection process. The curator of the museum must then make decisions about groupings of objects and a sequence or logical order in which they may be displayed. Care should be taken that works of art are highlighted. Physical facilities must stay in the background as a support and not a distraction. The most important art treasures must be placed in prominent places so that they are not missed. Information needs to be available in assisting patrons to understand the particular types of art being displayed.

Results of this study may be viewed with much the same perspective as one might have during a trip to an art museum. Responses to the questions are delineated through groupings or categories so that a context for understanding is created. Displayed are the joys, hopes, sorrows and dreams of twenty-four outstanding teachers --- displayed in such a way that they serve as touchstones for all those connected to the field of education --- displayed so that those who may have lost touch with the reality of a teacher's world may again be "in touch".

People who come to art museums identify most closely with certain treasures. Maybe it is because they remind them of something in their past or, perhaps, they catch a glimmer of themselves. For teachers,

the treasures may be likened to a mirror and a question: Is this a reflection of me or is this someone whom I might aspire to be?

I. DID ANY PERSON OR EXPERIENCE INFLUENCE YOUR DECISION TO BECOME A TEACHER?

Fourteen of the twenty-four teachers identified a person or persons as influencing their decisions to become teachers. Twelve of the responses identified other teachers. Three of the teachers had mothers who were teachers and had encouraged them while one teacher was encouraged by her husband who was also a teacher. In additional two non-teaching mothers also encouraged their daughters to enter the teaching profession. Other influences included two fathers, a grandmother, two cousins, an aunt, a husband, older sisters, in-laws and peers (friends); four of the teachers cited more than one person as an influence. Selected examples are presented.

> My Latin teacher was very good and I think she probably influenced me more than anyone else.... She was very energetic.... She was very well versed and she was a good teacher. You know, just knew everything. And her class was interesting and she seemed to be able to motivate the children and I guess I really just enjoyed that in her class.
>
> ... my father had said as I went off to college, "A woman's best insurance policy is a teaching certificate."
>
> My high school counselor asked me what I was going to do after school and I said, "I have no idea." She said, "Why don't you go to college?" And I said, "That takes money." ...She asked if I had thought of a scholarship... She said, "I think that with your aptitude and personality.... I think you would do well in teaching." And so I said, "I'll do it." She was my English teacher and a counselor in the high school.... In my home town ... she did a lot of guiding and counseling on her own because she really cared. She stands out in my mind when people say, "What teachers do you remember?"
>
> My mother because she taught for a long time in our home town. She substituted until she was seventy-three. And I think I got more material and ideas from her plus the

inspiration to do it I'm sure.

I ... came from a family of four ... where none of us went to college and so I assumed when I got out of high school that I would get a job, a secretarial type thing.... And a friend of my mother's had a daughter that was going to the branch --- like a junior college at home --- and she said to my mother, "*Susan should go. I think Susan would be a great teacher. I don't know why you're not sending her." And my mother replied, "She never said she wanted to go." And I said to my mother, "Well, I didn't think we had the money." And my mother said, "That has never been a problem. Your brothers and sister didn't want to go." And I often think that, because **Mrs. Percey, the woman who convinced my mother, was a teacher and how much influence her statements and her confidence in me had in my life, ... I'm a different person....

... When I went through school at a younger age, I wanted to teach nursery school but then I found out, through a counselor, that I had to go to college and ... I was one of those kids who didn't want to leave home. And so I was working at Woolworth's at the time, all the way through high school. And I thought, "That's what I'm going to do. I'm just going to work." And they made me a buyer as soon as I graduated from high school. So I thought, "That's what I wanted to do." And so, for a year and a half, I worked there and I was taking home $27.00 a week. And no future really other than selling stationery and ordering school supplies. And a woman came in and stopped at my counter to buy envelopes. Her name was Mrs. Percey and my folks had had her as a teacher and my older brother had her.... She looked at me and said, "Susan, you really do not belong here; you belong in school." And apparently, at that time, I was old enough to say, "I can leave home without my parents' support." And I just decided she was right. And that night was a Friday night and my father always picked me up and we went over to pick up my mother who was a buyer at a big department store in town. And we'd go out for ice cream and this was just something the three of us did. And we were sitting down and I said, "You won't believe that Mrs. Percey found me and said that I don't belong at Woolworth's." And my mother and dad both said, "We were just

---

* To protect identities Susan will always be used when reference is made to the first name of a female respondent.

** To protect identities Mrs. Percey will always be used when reference is made to the last name of a female.

> waiting for you to find that out." It was after Christmas and I think it was two weeks later that I enrolled at the junior college and that's where I started.

Clearly, the predominant influences on this group of teachers were other teachers --- teachers whom they respected --- teachers who had reached out and encouraged them.

Eight of the fourteen teachers identified relatives as having a significant influence on their career paths. For six of these teachers the influence was deepened because these relatives were also teachers themselves. Thus, the value placed on the teaching profession by practicing family members is a factor to be considered.

Having relatives who are also teachers is not always a positive influence, at least at the beginning. Three of the teachers indicated that it was not.

> Got out (of college) and I didn't teach just to show them I knew what I was doing....

> My older sister was a teacher ... that had turned me off. I certainly didn't want to be a teacher. Now, why? Because I really liked my sister but, perhaps because ... you want to do something different....

> As a matter of fact, I swore I'd never teach.... The whole family teaches. I was not going to teach.

Of the preceding three teachers, the first teacher entered the profession because of the influence of her mother who was also a teacher. Before this, she had had several other jobs. The second teacher was not influenced by any person or event while the third teacher shared an experience which had influenced her decision to become a teacher.

Four of the teachers identified experiences that influenced their

decisions to become teachers. For three of the teachers, these events were everyday circumstances.

> When I had a chance to go to college, the college I went to that was available to me was a teacher's college....
>
> As a mother of three children, I found out as I raised them and taught them about the world that I enjoyed teaching.
>
> I couldn't get (another) ... job after I graduated from college....

The fourth teacher shared an event which, though a negative experience, proved to be the directing force propelling her into teaching.

> I went to school (kindergarten) not speaking English. And because I was hesitant to go to school, my mother and father decided not to tell me that the other children would not be speaking the same language.... I was one of those babies that cried and carried on.... When I arrived, I wasn't cognizant, at first, that there was anything unusual, and the teacher was greeting everybody. And I guess I really didn't pay much attention until she gathered us together and pulled out "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" to read us a story. ...Now I knew that story. My mother read it to me a lot, but I couldn't understand what this lady was saying. So I remember thinking, "You're not concentrating. Pay attention, pay attention." And nothing was coming through.
>
> ...there was a principal ... she did something to me that just really, I've never forgotten. It was Halloween and I still didn't speak English. And she went from room to room to see all the children in costumes. She came to our room and I didn't even know what Halloween was. I mean, I came to school that morning totally freaked out. All these kids were walking in the streets with all these crazy costumes. I had no idea what was going on.... (I) got to school, looked around. I mean, you can imagine what kind of culture shock that is. You think you're going to a normal school day and see all this ... craziness. She lined us up and she went from child to child commenting on their costumes. Well, I didn't have a costume. I had no idea what was going on. And I kept moving towards the back. She obviously saw that I didn't have a costume.... She got to me ... when I couldn't move any further. I was at

> the end of the line.... She knew that I didn't have a costume and she said, "And how are you dressed?" And I hated her for that because I understood that much English. And I had a jumper on with big blousy sleeves and I made my arms go up and down and I said, "Butterfly, butterfly." I was embarrassed that she forced me to do that and I thought it was most unkind of her.
>
> I stayed in that school for first grade. They totally ignored me. Never called me up for reading groups and I was aware of that. Never made an attempt to teach me to speak English. And I was aware of that.... By third grade, I had taught myself to speak English and to read.... It was a terrible experience and I always said that I would never, ever allow any child to go through that. And I became a teacher because of that.

Turning the negative into a glowing positive force gave direction and purpose to the life of this teacher. Given the intensity of the events and the vividness and detail with which they are told, it seems safe to assume that the experience continues as an ever-renewing reservoir of commitment.

Not all teachers were able to identify an experience or person who influenced their decision to become a teacher. Six of the teachers responded with a "no" when asked this question. Examples of their responses follow.

> My admiration for my teachers in my early schooling experiences influenced me greatly in making a decision to become a teacher. I have always wanted to teach.
>
> I would have to say no because ... when I went to college ... there weren't a whole lot of options for women. And if you wanted to go four years and didn't want to be in business or engineering or dentistry or something like that, it seemed like there was only teaching.
>
> ... I just always had a real desire for being around children. I've always enjoyed being around them and they've been a gratification for me because it appears

that they also enjoy being around me.... I've just always loved school, loved children and I basically like to help others.

With the exception of this one common element, these six teachers had no other patterns in common. This information was obtained by checking to see if they might have similar educational backgrounds, similarities in lengths of teaching experience and similarities among other variables documented in the teacher profile section of the report.

Summary

Highlighting this section is the importance of the practicing teacher in selecting the best teachers to carry on the profession. Sometimes this is done directly through a word or two just at that opportune moment when a promising young person has come to a fork in the road. One cannot help but wonder if this practice is still continuing. Are teachers carrying on with the tradition of selecting the best for this essential role in our society?

Although the direct intervention of a teacher was cited by half the teachers as having an influence on their career decisions, the overall image of teachers in general may even be more important. This is supported by the fact that a majority of the teachers in the study discussed their past teachers in glowing terms --- teachers who were looked up to in the community as somehow "just above the normal cut." Thus, the general esteem with which teachers are held may have had an even greater impact on the choices made by these teachers.

II. WHAT WAS YOUR STUDENT TEACHING LIKE?

Sixteen of the twenty-four teachers remembered their student teaching as a positive experience. Five of these sixteen teachers also recalled some negative memories. While three teachers offered rather neutral comments, five indicated that their student teaching was a negative experience.

Eight of the teachers had two student teaching contacts. Three of the teachers did student teaching at the secondary and elementary levels while one teacher was in special education as well as elementary. One teacher had an experience in a rural school setting and a laboratory school setting. The remaining three teachers had two different grade levels.

Of the eight teachers who had two experiences, two perceived that one of their teachers had a positive impact on them while the other teacher had a negative impact. One of the respondents was fortunate enough to have had two good teachers while a fourth teacher believed she had good settings or sites and, thus, a good experience. Another teacher felt that she saw a lot of good teaching at the laboratory school setting where she was placed. However, the teacher did not view the laboratory school as a positive, realistic site. One of the teachers remembered both her teachers and settings in a positive way while another teacher was completely neutral in her descriptions. The last teacher was neutral about one experience and negative about the other.

Of the sixteen teachers who remembered a positive student teaching experience, eleven believed that the cooperating teacher was the most important positive force.

I felt like she took me a little bit at a time.... She was an excellent teacher so I could emulate her too.

... I did ... student teaching under Mrs. Percey.... She was fantastic, utterly fantastic woman. She taught me a lot of skills that I use to this day.... The first day I walked in class she said, "There's my filing cabinet and it's a mess.... Would you please rearrange --- file everything?" So I had to empty out all the drawers and rearrange and I found out at the end of my experience with her that that was how she got her student teachers into her program --- by letting them go through her files and see what materials she had and what was available, what kind of things that you would need.... I would get a little bit carried away and hyper and she would leave the class and then she would come back in later and say, "I'd like for you to walk down the hall". We had a ... sound system through the school and ... if you went into the office, you could hear into the classrooms.... She said, "Go down to the office" and she had gone down and told the principal to switch on the sound in this one teacher's room who did a lot of yelling and screaming and got real carried away with things. And I walked in the office and I could hear that and I thought "God, that's what I was doing", so that's why she sent me down there. That's how she did things --- she never really came out and actually said, "You're doing this wrong or that wrong or this right or that right." Then after I got back from the office she'd say, "Did you hear anything that sounded familiar?", and I said, "Yes, I did."

(My supervising teacher) ... has relayed how she instructed me to teach and I can't believe how well she knew me.... She said she read all about me ... and the fact that I had been around quite a bit and decided I was not going to be easy and she made me work for everything I did. The other girl (student teacher) had a lesson plan book the second week of school and I had reams and reams of paper that I had to do lesson plans because Mrs. Percey wouldn't give me one. She said afterwards, "I knew if I gave you a lesson plan book, you would turn your nose up at it." Finally, I went up and begged for a lesson plan book.... To this day I use it to the hilt as far as preparation and planning and the lesson plan book is my Bible. That's because of Mrs. Percey.... She let me discover what things were important for myself.

Even though the cooperating teacher is usually thought of as the most important element in a student teaching experience, three of the teachers believe that the setting for the experience was very important. Two of the teachers had also identified their cooperating teachers as

having a positive impact. For the third respondent, the setting or situation was the most important.

> I taught first grade for one semester and then sixth grade for another semester. I think most teachers would tell you that is most valuable in terms of experience and whether or not I liked it. Working in two different schools and totally different teachers, I really got an idea of what teaching was all about and that there was such a diversity among people on a faculty and in two different buildings.

While the cooperating teacher and selected site are both very important in student teaching, many university supervisors play an important role. Two of the teachers remembered the positive contribution which their respective supervisors had made.

> I said to my ... coordinator from the college, ... "I really don't know what grade to teach." And she said, "You could teach any grade." And that's all it took. What an ego trip because at that particular time she might have had other thoughts but that's what I needed. I needed someone to say that at that particular time. She said, "Let's try fourth grade." And I fell in love with it.

> Actually having her around and getting ideas from her. She was a very practical person in things to suggest, things for when you really get in there that would be helpful.

Of the sixteen teachers who were positive about their experience, two spoke of student teaching in a general way and did not specifically mention their cooperating teacher, site or university supervisor. This is not surprising given the fact that both of these teachers have fifteen to nineteen years of teaching experience each.

While most of the teachers were either positive or negative, three of the responses were classified as neutral. The primary focus of their responses remained quite descriptive in nature and did not contain information which would suggest a definite positive or negative thrust.

> I had enough hours to qualify me to student teach the very next summer at summer school.... It was my first open classroom activity and it was all seasoned teachers but we still had to go through making out forms and going to classes.... It was a formality.

Even though the majority of the teachers described their student teaching experience in positive or at least neutral terms, ten of the teachers remembered it as a negative experience. As with the positive responses, the most important element was the cooperating teacher. Unfortunately, the memories are generally negative. These included a student teaching experience where observation was the primary responsibility of the student teacher. Another spoke of wanting more practice in the area of classroom management. In total, seven teachers viewed their cooperating teachers from a negative perspective.

> Even though I learned a lot from her, I felt I was hanging out on the edge of some things at times. I didn't have any preparation. They ... would just tell me in the morning ... to go in and teach. I really didn't have any preparation time the night before to be as successful and prepared as I had wanted to be.

> I did not feel that the teacher that I had was interested in me learning anything.... I was there to help her out so to speak. Now that I look back at the time, I was scared to death and I would do anything she wanted me to do. But, I don't really feel I learned. I learned from the teachers that I had had when I was a student. That's how I learned.

> (She) kind of left me floundering because she sort of left me on my own and didn't give me a lot of directions....

The preceding example was perceived as a negative experience for this teacher. Based on her perception, one may assume that this teacher needed more guidance and help. This is not always true, however. One of the teachers who had a similar situation perceived her experience in positive terms.

> I was left totally alone which I guess was a compliment. She felt that I was capable of handling it.

While the first teacher was more dependent during student teaching, the second was of a more independent nature and, thus, viewed the situation as a "vote of confidence".

Just as the cooperating teacher was identified as a negative force during student teaching, the selected site also came under criticism by four of the teachers.

> I taught in lab schools.... The kids had student teachers every semester. They knew all about student teachers.... There were four of us in the room at the same time --- four student teachers. We taught for two and a half hours. That truly did not give us a good picture of what a real classroom situation would be.

> ... we would have to get up early ... like 5:30 a.m., get ready, go to campus, get a bus and drive to another town to do my student teaching from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, four straight classes, get back on the bus, go back to campus and have classes every afternoon and one evening class. Now that was a load and at the same time we had people that were doing student teaching right there near campus and that's it. It was not fair.

Unfortunately, the preceding teacher also viewed her cooperating teacher as having a negative impact on the total experience. Only one of the other teachers had a similar response while one teacher simply indicated that she "... did not like it at all...." In fact, the experience was so bad that, at the time, she decided she would never teach.

Summary

The most significant aspect of this question is probably not the ratio of positive responses to negative responses. Rather, it is the detail with which these veteran teachers remember their student teaching experiences. While three of the teachers described their experi-

ences rather generally, twenty-one of the teachers shared strong feelings along with specific and detailed descriptions.

III: IS THERE ANY INCIDENT OR EVENT THAT YOU ARE ESPECIALLY PROUD OF?

Of the twenty-four teachers, twenty-one identified one or more events that made them feel proud. Three of the teachers were unable to identify an event.

Four of the twenty-one teachers identified aspects of their personal lives that made them feel proud. One felt good that she was able to fill different roles; she described herself as a good friend and a good wife. She also felt that the personal characteristic of being easy going was of importance. Two of the teachers felt proud of their accomplishments in the area of community service. These accomplishments included organizing a theatre group, being a blood cross donor and finishing provisional courses for the Junior League. The fourth teacher took pride in her own children.

In addition to identifying important aspects of their personal lives, these four teachers, along with seventeen others, identified events they were proud of in their professional lives. One important category was that of tangible awards and recognition. Six teachers cited this category.

> I was outstanding senior woman in my class at *Horizon University.

> I'm especially proud of the title of Master Teacher that I received when going into Horizon School --- when Horizon School was opening, I got through the application stage, but then you had to go through interviews with people from the community.... So you had to go through a public forum and go through interviews there and you had to go through interviews with the principals and ... with the directors ... and when I came out of all the interviews ... there I was --- listed as

* With the exception of Oakland University, all other universities and schools will be named Horizon University or School.

> Master Teacher and had people under me, so that one I considered very important.
>
> ... when I was elected the first woman president of the L.E.A. (Local Education Association) and the only woman in the county at that time....
>
> I was chosen as one of the Jaycee's Teachers of the Year.
>
> ... I was honored as teacher of the month for my school district and that was a good honor because a person whom I had admired very much nominated me for it. How he felt about me was very important.... But, the most important thing was not so much getting the award as it was the fact that the principal that I was working for ... felt that strongly about my abilities.

Extrinsic rewards and recognition are important to these teachers and yet, as the last teacher points out, the attitude of her principal toward her was even more important.

A second category of importance within their professional lives was that of positive verbal reinforcement from significant others, including students, colleagues, principals and parents. Eight teachers cited examples from this category.

> When my first principal told me that he was proud of me because I did such a good job and he called me a Master Teacher.... I felt good about that. He wrote that in my record....
>
> ... a couple of weeks ago my principal came up to me and said, "Your kids are doing really well." And, matter of fact, twice in one week.... I guess maybe that sticks out in my mind because it doesn't happen very often with most principals.
>
> She (a former student) came back and saw me a few years ago from Virginia where her family had moved. It was such a wonderful thing for someone to make a trip all the way back to thank you for what you have done. That was exciting and something I am very proud of that I made a significant dent on somebody. That's what you hope for in teaching.
>
> ... a couple years ago I received a letter from a former student. She was at the high school and she was asked to write a story --- an essay about a person in her life who had in-

fluenced her. And unbeknownst to me, she wrote about me and one of the teachers over there sent me the copy of that letter and that is a real treasure of mine. She was a student who was not really one that was really outstanding in my mind as being real fond of me, but she quoted what I had said back in the fifth grade to her. She talked about my actions to the children and my behavior with the children ... that is a great, great important thing in my life.

When my name is spoken by parents, it's in a very positive light and with respect and that makes me feel good.

Whereas positive verbal reinforcement was of considerable importance to some, four of the teachers indicated that they felt great pride in their own students' achievements.

... I am especially proud when children do something on their own that shows ... self-directiveness and responsibility. I know then that I have helped lay the groundwork for them to come up with something they're really excited about and proud of and willing to share.

... I'm a first grade teacher and when the students come in, almost none of my students can read. I think it's always a great feeling when they leave and most of them can read.

... when I thought I've gone beating my head against the wall, you know, and nothing has sunk in and then something will happen ... and a kid will turn around and just all of a sudden just know everything I've taught him. A few years ago (I had) a student ... (who) spoke no English. Worked and worked with the child, but he just wouldn't respond. Finally, one day he wanted to go to the playground and he asked, "May I go to the playground and play on the swings?" And I said, "Yes, go ahead." And then all of a sudden it dawned on me --- Manuel asked me that question.... From then on he spoke English.

These teachers take pride in the hidden rewards which often accrue unnoticed by most except by those who receive them. Other more noticeable rewards involve roles for teachers which increase status. Four teachers identify this as an area about which they feel pride.

A fellow professional and I have successfully presented educational workshops together.

> One teaching experience was as a resource person. I developed a workshop for teachers providing creative ideas for classroom use. Throughout the year I worked with students and teachers carrying out creative projects.
>
> At school, we had some problems in our building and I'm on the Coordinating Council and I think I've done a little bit toward that....
>
> When my peers ... come to me for ideas ... I always feel good about that.

Delivering inservice workshops, acting as resource teachers and serving in leadership positions are roles which utilize and recognize the talents of these teachers. As new roles are designed for master teachers in the future, it will be important to acknowledge already existing ones.

Two of the teachers indicated that the completion of their degrees was a milestone about which they felt pride. Three of the teachers cited specific accomplishments, including the development of centers, individualized programs, and enrichment materials. One of the three teachers felt proud that she had had two teaching careers and the flexibility to complete some interesting ventures in between.

> ... I have had two teaching careers --- one from 1962-67 and then ten years later began a new teaching career ... in between ... (I started) a nursery school.... I went to Virginia next and baked bread and chopped wood and built a house and ran a boat business.

This teacher is proud not only of her professional accomplishments but her personal ones as well. However, she believes that these experiences outside of teaching have helped her to become a more effective teacher. Thus, these non-teaching accomplishments are categorized as events she feels proud of in her professional life.

Summary

Of the twenty-one teachers, four identified aspects of their personal lives that made them feel proud. These same teachers, joined by seventeen others, identified aspects of their professional lives that gave them feelings of pride. The most important categories were tangible awards and recognition, positive verbal reinforcement from significant others, students' achievements, and roles for teachers which increase status.

IV: TELL ME ABOUT THE APPROACHES OR TECHNIQUES THAT WORK BEST FOR YOU IN TEACHING

The original intent of the fourth question was to secure responses from teachers about instructional techniques rather than classroom management techniques. In fairness to the teachers, this was not made clear and, thus, four teachers talked only about classroom management strategies. Since this area will be discussed in great detail within the next question, the comments of these teachers will not be shared. Five additional teachers discussed both instructional and management techniques within this question.

Of the twenty teachers who discussed instructional techniques, eight teachers believe that a variety of teaching strategies should be used.

> Vary, vary, vary what you're doing. Today I went through the Science book reading a section with the children and helping them pick out some important facts. I wouldn't think of doing the same thing in science tomorrow.... I wouldn't want to use the same technique for two classes on a given day. If we read together in science, I wouldn't want to do it in social studies. I don't want them spending all day sitting in their seats.
>
> I do individual evaluation when I need it.... I do large groups, I do small groups, I do individualized. There is no set pattern.
>
> ... I can't expect them all to learn the same way so I try to do as many different methods, techniques as possible, so I can reach them all.

When responding to this question, three of these teachers also talked about specific techniques. These included "monks lessons", where no talking occurs and other means of communication are used, including writing on the chalkboard. Another teacher shared some of the values clarification techniques she has used while a third teacher discussed

the importance of the computer as a viable option for learning.

Almost as important as the concern about variety was a stress on planning. Seven teachers discussed the importance of being organized, being prepared, developing detailed lesson plans and staying ahead of students.

> I always try to anticipate students' needs and envision desired outcomes.... It is critical to map out in your mind how a lesson could be most effectively taught.

Linked to the concern over planning is the need for individualization. Six teachers view this concept as important in their approaches to teaching. This was defined in terms of lots of options, individual evaluations and variable speeds which students are allowed to take in completing tasks.

Six teachers identified rewards as an important approach in their teaching. Respondents discussed such tangible rewards as prizes, money, ink pens, stickers and the use of free time when students are finished with their work. During that free time options are provided such as games, records and filmstrips. The intangible rewards included hugs, kisses, touching, praise and recognition. Even though three of the teachers use both kinds of rewards, one of them did express ambivalent feelings when considering the use of tangible rewards.

> ... I feel kind of bad about it sometimes because ... I give stickers every now and then ... but I make sure those kids realize that this is not the goal in this classroom --- to get these stickers.... unless you're going to save every piece of paper, those stickers go away ... but once you've established a good background and you feel good about yourself, that's something that no one can take away from you.

Five of the teachers believe that structure is a very important element in their classrooms. Two noted that they had more structure

at the beginning of the school year and less toward the end, as children demonstrated responsible behavior.

Related to structure is the need for teachers to give clear explanations. Four respondents discussed the importance of teachers explaining why they're doing what they're doing and why students need to learn what they're teaching. In addition, teachers need to keep explanations simple and give good directions.

Several other approaches were identified by the teachers. These included:

1. holding students responsible for what they do (four teachers)
2. team teaching (three teachers)
3. holding high expectations for students in terms of learning (three teachers)
4. instructing students constantly (one teacher)
5. integrating subjects (one teacher)
6. encouraging competition among groups of students (one teacher)
7. helping students to care about each other (one teacher).

Further clarification was offered by some of the teachers in regard to the preceding approaches.

> Instructing students constantly. I instruct constantly. I feel like there is very little time in an early elementary child's life where they should be left alone for too long because I think I am responsible for their education and it's through my voice and through my talking and my pointing and my touching that they learn.

> Encouraging competition among groups of students. (We divided) ... the children into equal teams and they competed against one another.... My children ... caught on to the idea and I was very tickled by the fact that on test days ... the faster children would come in and grab the slower ones at their table ... and would drill with the flash cards. We got into problems when somebody would come up later and

say, "Why do we have to have Johnny at our table?" So things like that I wasn't sure ... how to casually or easily get out of the fact that Johnny's in special education and he's ... at a good table. But ... I did like the way they were taking the responsibility for their learning. It wasn't my suggestion that you sit down and work with someone. They were seeing it without my interaction or instruction. They were understanding the team concept.

Helping students to care about each other. We do back rubs in the room. I think kids really need to know its okay to touch and to ask for a back rub if you need it --- to take care of each other if they're feeling low or me if I'm feeling low. I really work a lot on developing a family feeling in the room.

Summary

Teachers in this study believe that they should use a variety of teaching strategies and should stress planning. Other important approaches included individualization, rewards, structure and clear expectations.

V. WHAT IS THE TEACHER'S ROLE IN MAINTAINING DISCIPLINE?

The teacher's role in maintaining discipline will be examined by using parts of the classification scheme designed by Wilford Weber (1983). The first category to be examined is the authoritarian approach to classroom management. (Weber and Roff, 1983, p. 10).

> The approach places the teacher in the role of establishing and maintaining order in the classroom through the use of non-punitive controlling strategies ... the teacher does not force compliance- does not demean the student, and does not use harsh forms of punishment. Primary emphasis is on preserving order....

Of the twenty-four teachers, twenty-three could be classified as using one or more of the strategies which are categorized as authoritarian.

The first strategy is establishing and enforcing rules. Fourteen teachers cited this strategy in their response to the question. Selected examples follow.

> ... the teacher is ... the leader in that ... (she) has to define ... what she expects of the kids and then put it exactly in specific terms for them so that they realize what's expected of them in terms of behavior.

> I let the kids know right at the outset --- these are the rules. They can help me write some of the rules, but I have some that I insist on as well. Together we will write those rules, put them on paper --- big paper so that everyone can see them in the classroom. And then we work out a set of consequences. If you do this, such and such will happen, and if you continue to do this, such and such will happen. It's worked extremely well!

> I set up guidelines and rules for all of them. They start understanding exceptions. If you have a learning disabled child or an emotionally impaired child, they understand sometimes that some of the rules have to be changed a bit, so they learn to adjust to rules....

> (I say to the kids) You know, if you are going to behave in a certain way, you've made that choice and these are the consequences and they need to understand that and they

> usually do. They know they can tell me right today what is going to happen if I don't do this or what is going to happen if I do do this. (Interviewer: That takes a little while to develop though.) It takes a while to develop it; it's reputation too. Sometimes they say, "Oh, you're in Mrs. Percey's class. You better make sure you do that."

Based on their review of the literature, Weber and Roff (1983) state that the effective teacher establishes reasonable, definable, clearly understood rules. Thus, empirical evidence supports the effectiveness of this strategy.

It should be understood that the other teachers in the study may also use this strategy. Since the question was open-ended, we may only assume that, on the particular day of their interviews, establishing and enforcing rules was not their major focus. This understanding will be true for all categories of response to this question. Some teachers chose one strategy to discuss while others simply did not mention a particular strategy.

Utilizing mild desists or mild reprimands is another strategy cited by three of the teachers in the study. This strategy is strongly supported by research.

> A mild desist ... is a brief statement of disapproval that describes what is wrong and what should be done about it in a tone that is nonthreatening and usually inaudible to all but the misbehaving student. A mild desist is a simple request for the restoration of order when there has been a disturbance; it serves to remind the student what he or she should be doing (Weber and Roff, 1983, p. 12).

The first example is taken from a group situation rather than the one-on-one situation described in the preceding definition. The teacher's tone, however, is consistent with the definition. (This was particularly apparent when listening to the taped conversation.)

> If I feel that things have gotten out of hand, we just sit down and we talk about it. "Hey, this just can't be. We are a group of people who have to exist in one room for a better part of the day and if we don't all cooperate, then it just doesn't work."
>
> When they get started (misbehave) I find it best if I ... just make comments to them ... to try to calm them down and get them in the spirit.

The second teacher combines the mild desist with another of the strategies found under the authoritarian approach to classroom management --- utilizing proximity control. Teachers who use this stragegy move closer to students when they see students misbehaving or when they believe students are on the verge of misbehaving. Though the effects of this strategy have not been researched (Weber and Rolf, 1983), its effectiveness appears likely, especially with elementary students. This, of course, assumes that the physical presence of the teacher will have a controlling impact on students.

Two teachers in the study specifically mentioned this technique --- not by name but by description. The first example is a continuation of the conversation from the preceding example. This teacher has a first/second split while the second teacher has fifth grade.

> I try to do a lot of going around quietly to children.... Even with reading groups, I find I catch myself in the corner too much. I have to go back and go out and make contact. Being away for too long is like being out of sight out of mind with little children. And I think that really helps. Bringing them to me or going to them I think helps.
>
> Just your physical presence means a lot. If you're standing at the door when they come in, it makes them orderly. If you're moving about the room instead of always staying up in the corner, it helps....

Hopefully, some research will be undertaken in the near future which documents the effectiveness of proximity control. In the meantime, for

these teachers, it has proven to be an effective classroom management strategy.

One teacher discussed the strategy of utilizing isolation and exclusion. This may include suspension in or out of school, in school detention and other forms of exile. At the present time, research studies do not support or refute this technique (Weber and Roff, 1983).

> ... there are some situations where the teacher can only do so much and if the child disrupts to the point where they cannot in any way be settled down, ... they don't belong in school and the administration has to take over.... I've used assertive discipline for the past couple of years ... it's a system where they ... know exactly what the room rules are. They're posted in the room and exactly what the punishment will be and what the reward will be ... like you get one check, you owe me five minutes, two checks you own me ten minutes ..., three checks you owe me your recess. Then ... we set up on our own a detention room and four checks gets the detention room.

It should be noted that the preceding teacher, along with many of the others, uses a system of rewards to balance the negative consequences of misbehavior. These will be outlined under a separate section entitled, "behavior modification strategies".

Before leaving this section on authoritarian strategies, it is important to understand that eight of the teachers spoke generally about their philosophy of discipline. These teachers did not mention specific strategies which could be neatly categorized. Instead, they spoke in general terms. The flavor of their remarks, however, is best categorized under the overall authoritarian category. Selected examples follow.

> I think the teacher is the most important thing. I think it is her responsibility to maintain the discipline. If it's out of control ... then I think you go to the princi-

> pal, but I think (if possible) it should be kept right in the classroom.
>
> The kids are there to learn and I don't believe anyone else has the right to interfere with that. This needs to be understood by the class.
>
> You have to be very firm with them and establish the discipline right away or you're going to lose control over them.

Controlling student behavior is a never ending agenda item for the majority of the teachers. The one teacher who did not mention this approach is a special education teacher. It is important to note that eleven of the twenty-three teachers combine authoritarian strategies with those from other categories.

The second category to be examined is the behavior modification approach. Based on principles taken from the basic ideas of B. F. Skinner, this approach views discipline as the process of modifying student behavior.

> The role of the teacher is to foster desirable student behavior and eliminate undesirable student behavior. The major assumption underlying this approach is that behavior is learned. Thus, the teacher uses behavior modification strategies to help the student learn appropriate behavior. (Weber and Roff, 1983, p. 13)

Eight teachers reported that they used one or more specific behavior modification strategies. All strategies cited find support for their use from literature which is based on strong empirical evidence (Weber and Roff, 1983).

Two of the teachers identified the importance of praise and encouragement as a strategy. One of them was very cautious about using extrinsic rewards such as stickers, even with young children. She believes that "... praise is far more lasting than a sticker or those kinds of

things." It could be argued that praise, like tokens, is an extrinsic reward. Encouragement, though related to praise, is softer and even less of an extrinsic reward. The tone of encouragement is captured very well in the comments of the second teacher.

> I'm thinking now of a little boy that just works so hard and does not do real well, but tries so very hard.... I think my comments to him very quietly, if I said them out loud, I think it would bother him because he realizes that he's not where the other children are. But when he brings up a question, I say, "I know you're really trying so hard."

Five teachers discussed the utilization of a token economy as a strategy in maintaining discipline. In this system the teacher uses tokens to reinforce students for appropriate behaviors. These tokens, in turn, can be exchanged for a variety of rewards. Selected examples follow.

> I also try to reward for good behavior too ... they can get a coupon every day and now we have gotten away from the coupons and are using a point system. They get a point every day if they don't get their name on the board and then they either get to eat lunch in the room with me, or, if they want to save their points, they can go to Pizza Hut with me.... It's worked out with their parents ... I pick them up at their house and then drop them off afterwards. I usually try to take two or three kids at a time.

> To earn a gym time you have to get a hundred beans. I have a kind of container and I'll say, "Oh, I like the way so and so has started out this morning." Bean. "I like the way this group has finished their work." ... Two beans.... And it goes on till it builds up and every night somebody counts them all and puts it on the board....

The second teacher also utilizes the strategy of fading in connection with the token economy system. Fading is a process in which the teacher gradually eliminates the reinforcement for a particular kind of behavior until the student is performing the appropriate behavior without

any reminders.

> And I found too that ... towards the end of the year, I don't have to use that type of system as much and I've found that ... I don't even have to put the name and the checks on the board as much ... they've just gotten to know what they're supposed to do.

The last of the behavior modification strategies to be identified was utilizing extinction. Teachers who use this technique choose not to reinforce a behavior that has been reinforced previously.

> Some things are best ignored. You can blow up a situation or calm it down. It's kind of like playing a musical instrument. You have to get the feel of a situation and "play it" as best you can, with your own interpretation.

All the behavior modification strategies cited by the teachers are strongly supported by empirical evidence. This fact, no doubt, contributes to their effectiveness as classroom managers.

A third category of approaches to discipline features the group process strategies. Based on principles from social psychology and group dynamics, this set of strategies features four assumptions:

1. schooling takes place within a group context --- the classroom group;
2. the central task of the teacher is to establish and maintain an effective, productive classroom group;
3. the classroom group is a social system containing properties common to all social systems, and the effective, producing classroom group is characterized by certain conditions compatible with those properties; and
4. the classroom management task of the teacher is to establish and maintain such conditions (Weber and Roff, 1983, pp. 23-24).

Within this group of strategies, the primary goal of the teacher is to develop and maintain a productive group. Four teachers cited examples of strategies which could be placed within this group.

The first strategy is maintaining group focus. Here the teacher

keeps all students alert and accountable for their performance. One of the teachers shared a practice which appears to fit nicely into this category.

> We have a policy in our room where we may "buzz" anyone else who has said something derogatory or negative to another class member. The "buzz" when said aloud, reminds us all that a class standard has been violated. They have the option to "buzz" me, which will happen. And at first it sounds kind of dumb and you hear a lot of buzzes at the beginning of the year but then it automatically happens. The kids don't look around anymore to see who has done it or who has said it.

Closely related to maintaining group focus is a strategy called <u>developing cooperation</u>. This probably occurs infrequently in most classrooms due to the many competitive kinds of strategies which usually dominate. In this example, the teacher combines several strategies. While it is obvious that she uses a token economy and encouragement (her response was also tallied under that category) her primary focus is on the group.

> I want them to want others to get those stickers too, besides themselves. And we get to the point where we applaud for each other when we do something that's good. We encourage when we didn't do so well.... "Well, you got more right this time than you did last time," I like for them to do that to each other, too. I like it when they feel proud of each other's accomplishments also. I think they get that because they know that I'm proud of them when they do something....

Even as this teacher is focusing on the group, she skillfully combines yet another of the powerful behavior modification strategies, the strategy of <u>modeling</u>.

The third teacher cited <u>role playing</u> as the strategy which she employs with her students. Rather than using role playing situations from a book, she designs her situations based on the lives of her students.

> We deal with wise cracking and if someone feels angry at an-

other child, we get into it with role play and figure it all out instead of just, "You can't do that".

The fourth teacher used the ripple effect at certain times. When correcting the behavior of one student, she is aware that her one action often improves the behavior of nearby students who also need to improve their behavior.

The group process strategies do have a different tone and emphasis than the other two categories already outlined. The strategies chosen by the teachers find support for their use based on empirical research (Weber and Roff, 1983). The ripple effect was not categorized by Weber and Roff. However, support is found for its use from the work of Kounin (1970).

A fourth group of processes feature the socio-emotional climate strategies. Based on the principles of clinical and counseling psychology, these strategies assume that effective classroom management is largely a function of positive teacher-student relationships. Thus, the teacher's primary goal is to develop and maintain good interpersonal relationships between herself and her students. Two teachers emphasized this area when responding to this question.

The first strategy, fostering positive interpersonal relationships, was cited as one teacher's predominant focus. This strategy receives strong support from empirical evidence (Weber and Roff, 1983).

> First of all, you have to develop a relationship with the students.... I'm tough. Don't get me wrong, but I try to get to know them. They know me. For instance, I bet if any kid has a dog, I probably know the dog's name. I go for things like that with them because I want to know them. They know that my husband's name is Ralph....

> They know things about me and they know that I'm always on a diet. You know, we kid about stuff like that. And I think that makes it easier for me to discipline them.

The preceding teacher also utilizes the strategy of humor when developing interpersonal relationships with her students. This strategy has not been researched sufficiently. Thus, no empirical evidence advocating or condemning the strategy exists at present (Weber and Roff, 1983).

The second teacher integrates the strategy of communicating acceptance with many strategies from other groups.

> I don't ever let them feel that I don't like them because they didn't do something right.... I still like you, but I don't like the behavior that you just did.

Oddly enough, this strategy has not been researched sufficiently to show support. Perhaps it is a more elusive strategy to capture for definitive research purposes.

The strategies found in the socio-emotional category are a helpful way of capturing the responses of teachers. They offer quite a contrast to the tone conveyed by responses from other categories.

Summary

Of the twenty-four teachers, sixteen use primarily the authoritarian strategies, whereas the remaining categories (behavior modification, group and socio-emotional) were each chosen by only one teacher as her primary focus. The five remaining teachers split their responses primarily between two groups. Of these five, two of the teachers were evenly distributed between authoritarian and behavior modification strategies whereas the remaining three are best categorized within the authoritarian and group processes.

The heavy emphasis on the authoritarian strategies may be a sign of

our times. Some of the veteran teachers in this study (most have had at least fifteen years of teaching experience) looked back to the times when teaching was not as difficult.

> The children are coming to school with a different attitude than they once did ... education is not as important to them as it was when I was going to school.... And the teacher was respected, even if she wasn't the best teacher ... she just ... commanded respect.... I think the children are so different and you just really have to be very firm with them....

Selected References

Kounin, J. Discipline and Group Management in Classrooms, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970.

Weber, Wilford A. and Roff, Linda A. "A Review of the Teacher Education Literature on Classroom Management", Classroom Management, Princeton, New Jersey: Educational Testing Service, March, 1983, pp. 7-42.

VI. HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOURSELF?

Perhaps the most significant pattern of response to this question was not one of similarity of perception among teachers but, rather, the lack of it. The majority of their self-descriptions were totally unique from teacher to teacher. Only five characteristics were mentioned four or five times each:

1. Caring/loving
2. Organized
3. Open to listening to other viewpoints
4. Enthusiastic
5. A friend

Nine self-descriptions were noted two or three times each:

1. Patient
2. Content/happy
3. Too busy
4. Energetic
5. Positive
6. Candid/honest
7. Enjoy what I do
8. A good teacher
9. Expect too much of the students

Nine of the teachers were critical of themselves and described things about themselves they would like to change or that they perceive as negative.

> I would like to be ... a little bit friendlier, a little bit warmer.... I need to listen a bit more ... to what

> the kids have to say about things that happen personally or just little funny things that happen or a comment here and there.
>
> Sometimes my standards ... morals and ... priorities get in the way of understanding other problems.
>
> On the negative side, easily upset by change ... I don't fall apart, but it does upset me. I do need a lot of assurance. I don't think so much that I'm doing a good job although I like that, but I guess just being liked. I like to be liked.... I do a lot at school ... but I always wonder have I done enough? Scared to death that I haven't done enough. And I'm a worrier....
>
> Sometimes I feel insecure. I hope others don't notice it.
>
> I think I'm too hard on myself and sometimes on the kids. because I expect perfection and when I don't get it, it upsets me.
>
> I'm honest, perhaps too honest at times.
>
> I'm involved with too many things ... and some things just don't get done properly.... The world is rushing by and I'm running like mad to catch up....
>
> I spread myself too thin and become frustrated and cry as a result. I have trouble saying no.
>
> ... sometimes I make errors.

Each of these nine teachers were very open and candid in assessing herself. In addition, three of the nine teachers identified areas in their professional lives that were in conflict. Six more teachers contributed examples also. A conflict between being organized and being flexible was identified as one of the problem areas.

> When I've spent all my time getting organized, ... I don't adjust well to someone saying, "We're not going to have reading today, we've got something in the gym." ... (When) I've got the movie planned ... and the movie doesn't come, I'm saying, "Oh my gosh, now what'll I do?"

Another of the teachers worked in the area of special education. She describes herself as she struggles to balance her own expectations

for her children in the context of the children's capabilities.

> I try to constantly remind myself of what little steps they've taken and I do sometimes expect too much and then I feel like ... that is reflected then in my day. You know, comes back to haunt me ... when I've had a bad day or something.

Difficulty in balancing the roles as friend and teacher was also described by three of the teachers.

> As far as with the children, I really like to be friendly with them but I don't want them to think of me as a buddy and have them think they can tell me what to do.

Additional conflicts were noted in the comments of one teacher who felt torn between the need to listen to the concerns of children and the need to attend to other classroom matters.

> (There are) ... papers over here that need to be checked and I should get over and get this set up and I should get this group going and somebody is sitting here talking....

Needing to be liked was identified by one of the teachers as a negative rather than a positive. Ambivalent feelings were expressed by the teacher.

> ... I don't think I go around seeking that (being liked). It certainly helps if I have it and I don't care for it when I don't get it. ... my husband ... will say "Well, why didn't you tell him off?" I'll say, "I can't tell him off." "But then why don't you tell that principal go to hell?" "I can't do that!" He'll say, "Well your problem is you're just so worried about needing to be liked...." I say, "Well maybe it is. Maybe that's why I can't do it. There's a lot of people who deserve it. I can't do it!"

The conflict between having compassion and being objective was described by one of the teachers.

> ... I am a caring person but at the same time I ... know the difference. I know when not to get too involved with it.

The preceding examples document the ever present pressure of making choices among conflicting values in the teaching profession. Certainly, the ability to make appropriate choices is a crucial skill for the effective teacher.

Summary

The question, "How would you describe yourself?" was originally designed to capture patterns and similarities among respondents. With the exception of a few consistent characteristics and the categories which focus on self-criticism and values conflicts, no patterns were documented. Thus, it seems appropriate to end with a celebration of the individuality of selected teachers.

> I think caring is the one thing that people say about me more than anything else.
>
> I ... love to get hugs and love to give hugs.
>
> ... I'm dedicated to understanding the human condition.
>
> I get involved in lots and lots of things because I just can't stand to see things not be done.
>
> I like myself most of the time.
>
> A perfectionist which seems to get me in trouble.
>
> I'm very old fashioned ... I think I really follow a very regimented type of day. I am organized. I always make lesson plans. I use my lesson plans. I'm strict. I believe in homework.
>
> When I tackle something, it's with both feet.
>
> I try to keep up with things which I think you have to do in education or any field. I do try to do that. I take classes and workshops. It's sometimes hard as you know.
>
> I require time to myself....

VII: HOW MIGHT YOUR STUDENTS DESCRIBE YOU?

Thirteen of the teachers indicated that their students would say they were comfortable to be with. This was defined in different ways including being friendly, good-natured, easy-going, nice, positive, pleasant to be with and lenient. One teacher believed that her students would describe her as a human being. Another teacher felt that her students could come to her with their concerns and problems.

> I eat lunch with them, one or two children at a time. I think they say things to me that they wouldn't be comfortable saying to other teachers. I'm not sure that's all for the good either. If I'm going to make their education meaningful, I need to know if they are satisfied with what we're doing and why and what we are not doing and what they would like to do and if it's as feasible as it sounds....

Of the preceding thirteen teachers, five indicated that their students would also describe them as expecting a lot of students. In addition, five more teachers also felt that their students would describe them as requiring high performance. Many of these teachers' comments were particularly helpful in clarifying this category.

> I had them (the students) do that last week. I knew I was coming and I told them, "I'm going to Oakland University to be interviewed.... I want you to describe what kind of a teacher I am." ... generally they wrote what you'd expect kids to write.... One kid, though, did make a funny remark that made me realize that I harp on vocabulary --- that I harp on, "Learn your stuff, you know, so that people will know that you are a good student." And he wrote this big dissertation on the fact that Mrs. Percey just really makes sure that you learn everything that you are supposed to and she stresses vocabulary....

> My students feel that I'm easy-going but also a tough taskmaster --- that I expect a lot and expect the very best.

> Some think that I'm harder than other teachers. One student told me that the spelling test was harder than the one they'd have in junior high. But I got some nice notes and a bou-

quet on Valentine's Day.

> I push them, maybe some of them too much. I get something out of all of them. They don't realize the potential and they are doing things that they never dreamed they could do. They say, "Last year I couldn't even write a good paragraph and this year I'm writing whole reports." I say that you were there just waiting to be discovered and I discovered you.
>
> They know I'm fair but they know I'm a taskmaster and they know they're going to learn something that is really interesting because it kind of gets by word of mouth ... you'll know that when you get out of Mrs. Percey's class.

The last example integrated being <u>fair</u> with having high expectations. Five more teachers also identified being fair as a way that their students would describe them.

<u>Caring</u> was a way in which five teachers believed they would be described by their students. For one teacher caring meant loving.

> But I do think they would say I'm loving. I let them sit on my lap and cuddle up next to me and I give them hugs goodbye.

Related to caring, yet different, was having a <u>sense of humor</u>. Four teachers were categorized as being described this way by their students. Included in their responses were the words fun, funny and crazy.

Three of the teachers believe that their students might describe them as <u>crabby</u> or grouchy. One shared a very candid example.

> I think they would describe me as crabby some days, but I always give them a warning. I walk in and say, "This is not a good morning so don't push."

Taking a totally different tack are three teachers who stated that their students would say they <u>did special things for them</u>.

> And I try to make them (the students) have as many experiences that are out of the ordinary. I do a lot of cooking in the room and things like that that they can remember because you don't often remember how you learned to read but if you made cookies in the classroom --- one girl at recess asked me, "Did you make cookies in the room?" I said, "Yes, I did, I

think once or twice." And I think sometimes those special experiences are what you remember.

The remaining responses from teachers were only cited once, with the exception of the first four descriptions which were cited twice.

1. Firm/mean
2. Pretty/young
3. Consistent
4. Takes time to help us
5. Patient
6. Best teacher in the building
7. Sometimes not patient enough
8. Interested in students
9. Interested in school subjects
10. A continual learner
11. Busy
12. Not as a buddy
13. Not perfect
14. Dresses well

Of special interest was the explanation of dressing well.

> ... they watch what I wear. They check me out the minute I walk in the door.... But they'll say, "Oh, I like those shoes", or "That's a nice dress you've got on", or ... "Oh, is that a silk blouse?" ... For some reason they don't expect teachers to look like the rest of the populace, you know, so when you do take a little bit of extra care, you're noticed.

Summary

If their students were asked to describe them, the teachers in this study cite the following descriptions which might be used: comfortable to be with, expecting a lot of students, being fair, caring, having a sense of humor and doing special things for students. Additional responses were also shared. With the exception of being crabby, these responses were cited only once or twice.

VIII. ARE YOU ABLE TO BALANCE YOUR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE?

Twenty of the twenty-four teachers gave a positive response to this question whereas four gave a negative response. Of the former, responses ranged from a definite "yes" to a "Pretty much. It's really hard." Of the latter, responses ranged from "Not real well" to "My husband said to say yes. But I said no."

Of much greater importance are the definitions given to the concept of balance. For one teacher, balancing meant giving her family seven or eight hours a day just as she gives her job. She concludes, "I can't balance it. No, in all honesty." A second teacher describes herself as a juggler:

> I try. It is really tough. It's like being a juggler trying to keep all the balls in the air without letting one fall. The demands are great and challenging. I think I've had a richer life as a result of working and keeping family life going.

Although the second teacher states that she is able to balance her personal and professional life, there is the same sense of profound tension between the personal and professional spheres.

Not all teachers report this kind of tension between the diverse roles in which they find themselves. Perceptions must again be informed by definitions given to the concept of balance.

> I think everyone carries part of their personal life with them to the job but I try and not let it interfere with my work. I become so involved with my children I do not have time to think of myself or personal matters.
>
> There's no way that you can separate it, but you can definitely balance it....
>
> I have to kind of put my --- live my life in little boxes

> or little bags because when I walk out of that school from time to time I am going into a whole new group of problems. I cannot take the school with me.

Clearly, it is not the quantitative aspect of this question that explains the thinking of teachers on this subject. Ideas of what constitutes balance must be shared to understand the heart of the matter. Definitions, however, are not the only factor to consider.

Whereas fifteen of the teachers had children at home, nine did not. However, the additional responsibility of having children at home did not affect the distribution of "yes" and "no" responses. Of the teachers who gave a negative response, two had children at home and two did not have children at home.

Responses from the teachers who have children at home reflect a continuum of thinking about the concept of balance. Examples are presented in a graduated manner:

> I am better now that my son is older and more self sufficient. He is still not to be left alone. My husband is very self sufficient, very supportive.

> ...when you are raising children at home and you have, you go home to all of their events and activities and all of the demands there, it's very demanding ... and challenging too but I think ... I know I've had a richer life as a result of it....

> .., I try not to bring things home, because once I get home, I like to give my time to my husband and kids. You know, I have to sneak materials in sometimes. I will call parents at home. I do all my phone calling at home.

> There are nights that I go home rather frustrated and I have to sit down and try to separate myself. That's one disadvantage I find .., of working close ... (no) in-between breathing time.

> I don't do test papers until my children are in bed so it

doesn't take away from them and they aren't jealous of the things I'm doing.

I don't know if anybody can leave a job and do that (balance their personal and professional lives).... Sometimes my own kids get jealous of that.... "Oh, you're always doing this for your class", or "You're taking them on this trip and I've never been there." ... So I have to make a concerted effort to see to it that we do go to that special place, or whatever it is, that I do it for them as well.... I'm not a magical woman. I keep telling them I'm not the Bionic Woman.

Clearly, a range of perceptions exists among teachers who have children at home. This same range exists among teachers whose children are grown or who do not have children.

... I think my life is probably a little more professional than personal because of my involvement in the district education association as much as teaching in school. But I balance them both.... I'm active in my church ... in the community. I'm always in millage campaigns and fund raising things....

I've never been able to leave at four. I end up taking things home, correcting papers and I never seem to get done but I do have activities that I do outside of school and sometimes I just forget it.

... I still find now I go out with people. We're in a group and as soon as somebody finds out I'm a teacher, they start talking about teaching and education and I don't want to talk about it. I talk about it with teachers at school if we go out. ... I just want to get away from it.

Whereas one might expect a better perception of balance among teachers who have no responsibility for children at home, this was not supported in the present set of interviews. However, additional concepts related to the perception of balance did appear. One dealt with variations in the perception of balance throughout the school and calendar year.

Throughout t[illegible] school year I find it frequently when we get together, that's (school) what we talk about all the time....

> During the summer, I pretty much --- I don't do anything with school and then I kind of relax and unwind that way.
>
> I would say that September and October are tough months. Then I tend to almost do more than I probably should do. I really get involved in setting my classroom up.

The preceding examples do reflect a sense of seasonal balance which presents yet another perspective. In contrast to a seasonal balance is a year to year changing balance. One of the teachers, for example, noted that her group this year took more of her time than groups had in previous years.

Moving in still another direction is the notion of integration rather than balance or conflict.

> It's a 24 hour job. It's always at the back of your mind when you see something in the store or you're on vacation and you view everything through the eyes of a teacher....

These teachers (three in number) do not see themselves as changing roles but, rather, as moving through life as "teacher". For them, the potential struggle between competing spheres appears to be less of a problem.

Summary

Rather than attempting any kind of quantitative conclusion, this section will end with imagery. Consider the teacher who describes herself as a juggler. The juggler is ever vigilant lest something fall. The balance is there but it is precarious at best. What is the answer for this teacher? Compartmentalization? Total integration? Does this teacher want or need an answer?

IX. WHAT DO YOU DO FOR FUN?

The most important fun activity cited by teachers was sports, followed by reading, traveling, music, getting together with friends, playing cards, theatre, and doing things with the family. Thirteen of the teachers indicated an interest in a variety of sports including horseback riding, swimming, boating, cross country skiing, water skiing, bowling, racquetball, tennis, golf, sailing, exercising and attending sports activities. Eleven of the teachers chose reading as one of their responses to the question. Types of reading included biographies, historical fiction, romance novels, historical novels and mystery stories. Seven teachers indicated that they enjoyed traveling while six were interested in the world of music. Six enjoyed getting together with friends; six liked to play cards and five chose the theatre. Five shared things they did with their families which included apple picking, cutting their own Christmas tree, vacations and going to sports activities together. Handcrafts which included weaving, needlepoint, sewing knitting and crocheting were identified as a fun activity by four of the teachers. An additional four teachers indicated that they enjoyed being with their own children.

The remaining responses given by teachers were chosen once or twice. They include such diverse activities as calligraphy, building miniatures, people watching, camping, programming computers, giving parties, taking classes, club work, community service, dancing and shopping for antiques.

Of particular interest are those hobbies that have turned into part-time employment for four of the teachers. One teacher who enjoys

cooking has started a small catering business while another teacher who likes to swim gives private swimming lessons in the summer. A third teacher sells her handcrafts to bazaars at Christmas time and the fourth teacher features her art at exhibits.

Summary

Each of the twenty-four teachers shared one or more hobbies or pastimes in common. Nineteen of the teachers shared two or more in common while one teacher identified seven ways of having fun that were also identified by other teachers. While all of the teachers identified at least one specific fun activity, most identified three or more activities. On balance, this is a very important factor in understanding the teachers as people.

X. WHAT SITUATIONS ARE STRESSFUL FOR YOU?

Of the eighteen questions asked during each interview, the question about stress yielded the greatest tangle of expectations and incompatible prescriptions for the behavior of teachers. One of the most important problem areas identified was that of time management. Of the twenty-four teachers, eleven identified this as an area of concern.

> ... if I'm working and ... somebody comes in with a message about ... one thing, okay and then I get going again and five minutes later the door opens and somebody else comes in. There's that constant traffic in and out.

> ... this past week (there) have been a lot of kids leaving, kids coming in, and I think I get real frustrated when I can't get things accomplished that I feel I should be accomplishing that day.

> We have more children in our class this year and fewer breaks.... Getting to each child and really feeling that I have dealt with that person for the day is stressful because I don't always feel I can.

> Unfinished work creates stress. If things start falling out of place, like my house is turned upside down and my report cards haven't been marked yet and the laundry is piled, that is very stressful. And they sound small. But if the small things are in place, I can take care of the big things that need attending to. The time element is very stressful. I haven't learned to step over the laundry and take care of the big things. I like all those piddly things in their places and then I can concentrate better.

Whereas time management was of crucial concern, a second area emerged as at least equally troublesome for teachers --- the area of interpersonal relationships with parents. Ten teachers identified their relationships with parents as highly stressful. Two indicated that parents often expect too much of their own children. Five other teachers specifically noted the stress involved with parent-teacher conferences; three described their difficulty in dealing with criticism from parents.

> I had a parent who was very angry the other day who came in on an incident where she thought I was treating her child unfairly. That kind of situation is stressful for me. I think I'm intimidated somewhat by parents.

One teacher described how a parent had gone to the principal instead of going to her. Another noted the lack of support from parents when their children were misbehaving. It would appear that these teachers find their job a lonely vigil rather than a concerted team effort to work effectively with students.

Adding to the isolation of the teacher is a perceived <u>lack of support on the part of principals or school specialists</u>. Seven teachers identified this as an area of critical concern.

> I put an E on a child's, ... report card. Parents came in and said, ... "Well, that woman can't give my child an E." Principal said, "Why not?" "Because E means you don't do anything." ... "Now our child does do some things." ... But --- and I --- oh, they were angry. I really thought they were going to bring a gun and shoot me. They were that angry and both of them rising up off the table, shouting over the thing. The principal's yelling, "Sit down, sit down, sit down." ... in front of the parents, without even having a conference with me, the principal said, "I agree with the parents." Handed me the report card and said, "Change it to a D." So, in front of the parents, I lost the battle.... I changed it to a D. I wasn't going to fight the principal and the parents.

> ... another teacher was physically attacked during parent-teacher conferences with a knife by a parent --- no support from the downtown administration. Nobody contacted her even to see if she was all right --- physically, mentally, emotionally ... that could happen to any one of us at any time. Even in individual buildings, (there are) principals who will not back up teachers on a parent confrontation. Principals who will not get supplies and materials that you need and need desperately and you've asked them and asked them and asked them.

> If I think I'm not getting help with a problem that I think is severe. I can think of one instance where I had a child who was very, very emotionally impaired. He was literally choking other children when he would get angry. He had no

> way of controlling his anger.... This went on and on and I could just feel the frustration growing and the feeling of helplessness and not getting the help as soon as I think I should get it is very stressful to me.

Of the seven teachers who identified this as an area of concern, only one felt she was not receiving enough assistance from school specialists whereas six felt that their administrators were not supporting them.

Additional stress points identified by teachers involved a lack of congruence between teacher expectations and reality as they experience it. Eleven teachers identified areas of stress:

1. teachers expecting good behavior from students and not getting it (six teachers)
2. teachers expecting students to understand the material and students not understanding it (two teachers)
3. teachers expecting an organized and consistent principal and encountering one who isn't (two teachers)
4. teachers expecting stability and encountering unexpected changes (one teacher).

The issue of control or the lack of it was identified by two teachers. Others discussed conditions that were out of their control and created stress. Each of the situations was cited once, except for the first two examples which were cited by two teachers.

1. Teachers not supporting each other.
2. Being evaluated.
3. Newspapers stressing the negative rather than the positive.
4. Not being able to do anything about a child's home life.
5. Having a split grade and giving them the full curriculum.

6. Machines that don't work.

7. Teachers in grades lower than mine who aren't doing their work.

The last area of concern dealt with speaking in front of groups of adults. Four of the teachers have been active in working with groups of other teachers, speaking to parent groups or, in one case, teaching a university class. Though they contribute their time and talents in this manner, it is not always easy for them.

> Never in my life --- you know, you've heard people talk about how the cotton is in your mouth and you can't talk --- never had I experienced that -- then I really did.

Clearly, teaching is a very stressful occupation. For those who assume additional roles in the areas of inservice training, the stress may increase. On the other hand, this type of stress is handled well by some of the teachers in the study who have assumed inservice responsibilities but do not report any stress related to this area.

Summary

The most stressful situations identified by these teachers were in the areas of time management, interpersonal relationships with parents, lack of administrative support, expecting good behavior from students and not getting it, lack of control over situations, and speaking in front of groups of adults. With the exception of the last area, these findings are consistent with other studies (e.g., Manera and Wright, 1980; Sparks, 1979; Young, 1980).

The last area of concern holds important implications for inservice training. As more teachers are asked to speak in front of their peers and other groups of adults, feelings of stress about this emerging area

of teacher responsibility are likely to increase. Staff development programs of the future will need to include a component on public speaking, especially for teachers who will be working more with adults in groups.

Selected References

Manera, Elizabeth S. and Wright, Robert E. "Stress Factors in Teaching", Action in Teacher Education, Fall, 1980, pp. 51-56.

Sparks, Dennis C. "A Biased Look at Teacher Job Satisfaction", The Clearing House, May, 1979, pp. 447-449.

Young, Tim. "Teacher Stress: One School District's Approach", Action in Teacher Education, Fall, 1980, pp. 37-40.

XI. HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH STRESS?

Ten of the twenty-four teachers deal with stress by "talking it out" with significant others. Six teachers find support from husbands; three share problems with their principals and three find listeners among colleagues. An additional three identified friends while five talk to themselves. One teacher found support from specialists within the school setting.

> I make it known to someone who is in a position to do something about it. That takes some of the stress off by just being able to talk about it, getting it out in the open. I feel like I can take it so far and they have to pick it up, they being the specialists, whether it's a social worker, a psychologist, or a reading consultant. Once they pick it up, I feel the stress has been picked up too.

> ... if I feel something is really bothering me at school, I don't have many qualms about going in to the principal and saying, "I'm bothered by this that's happening now." For instance, ... we were having bus lines and taking the kids out, and I didn't feel the kids were respecting me. They weren't just my students ... and I finally said to my principal, ... "I don't want to go on the rest of the year like this, I don't like this." He was an easy person to talk to and we worked some things out.

> ... we're a very supportive faculty and that really helps. I have very close friends who are in a similar situation as I am teaching, single parenting, loving to ... do ... yard work ... and we laugh over the situations and say "We should have called each other to put up that tree."

In contrast to those teachers who reach out to others for support are five teachers who deal with stress by separating themselves from others. The ways they select are quite unique and reflect their own very personal and successful remedies.

> In good weather I take drives and just kind of get by myself --- a little solitude.

> I go to my desk and I tell my kids I am going to sit at

> my desk and I don't want anybody to speak to me. Don't call my name ... you do not know me for five minutes. Don't come near me for five minutes unless it's an emergency and you're about ready to die. Stay away from me. And they do. They keep away from me.
>
> ... this year we had a very stressful week at school.... It developed over several weeks. It culminated in one horrible week at school with the staff at each other's throats. My classroom was in turmoil. I just couldn't seem to keep it together and so I announced to everybody, "I am leaving --- I am walking out of this situation. I can't deal with it, I'm going to San Francisco for four days. Goodbye." And I did.... People at school were totally mystified. Some were even horrified, I think.... When I came back, everything was fine. I was ready to go again.

Of these five teachers, one of them did indicate that she also counts on friends with whom she can share concerns. The others may also but did not mention it when responding to the question. Of particular interest is the variety of ways by which teachers chose to physically separate themselves from the source of the stress.

The same technique was also used by two teachers with students who were creating stressful situations through their misbehavior. In these cases, teachers asked their students to "take a breather" by having them put their heads on their desks or by initiating a total change of classroom activities.

Whereas some stressful situations can be dealt with by a separation technique, not all lend themselves to this approach. This is particularly true when teachers are asked to follow prescriptions and guidelines which are in conflict with their own value systems. Two of the "old-timers" explained how they dealt with this troublesome dilemma by simply ignoring the demands that seemed unreasonable to them. And being "old-timers", they "got away with it".

> ... I think that to try and do all of the things that some administrators want you to do would have you running in circles all the time. And I think that for you to feel good about yourself, you have to feel good about what you're doing. If you're doing something that you don't think is necessary, then that's going to add more stress. So just don't do it.

Some teachers do not choose this approach since the possible confrontations between the teacher and the administrator may cause more stress than the original situation. However, the secure teacher may not fear this possibility as much. In fact, the first "oldtimer" declared that it "made me feel really a lot better". The confrontation in question had to do with the rule of not letting two students go to the bathroom at the same time from the same classroom.

> ... later I went to his office and I said, "Well, you know, I should have credit for something. I mean I should be able to know when I can let two students go to the bathroom at the same time."

While the first teacher believes that a professional should be able to make exceptions to the rules when necessary, the second teacher was more concerned about district-wide curricular requirements which might not be as beneficial to her students as those she might choose. As a result, she quietly goes about the business of choosing her own materials and textbooks. Although only cited by two teachers, this critical area of decision-making may well underlie much of the stress which teachers experience on a day-to-day basis.

Another tack which teachers took in dealing with stress was one of release through physical or emotional means. Ten teachers described their favorite ways of dealing with stress. These included taking a vacation, sleeping, going out for a good time, smoking, swimming, crying,

using relaxation techniques, gardening, baking, "blowing off steam", exercising, and having a glass of wine.

> If you ever feel like you are really uptight ... check and see where your tongue is.... If you're pushing your tongue against the roof of your mouth, you're in a stressful situation. So then just start ... try to calm down and concentrate on getting your tongue down to the bottom of your mouth and it ... it seems to work really well for me.
>
> I'm the one who cries all the way through the movie. I cried when I read a story to them one day and the next day a boy said, "Are you going to flood the room again today?"

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the teachers' responses to dealing with stress is their diversity rather than their similarity. Additional ways included:

1. identifying the problem and its cause
2. putting a smile on my face, gritting my teeth and walking into the classroom
3. recommending that a troublesome student be placed in someone else's classroom
4. allowing my classroom and home to be less than perfect
5. enjoying a calm, good home life as a balance
6. cutting down on outside activities
7. accepting my job as status quo with no plans for getting promoted.

The last comment is particularly important in light of possible career ladders which may be formalized for outstanding teachers in the very near future. If new roles are designed, additional stress may be added to the teaching profession.

Summary

The most important ways in which teachers deal with stress include "talking it out" with significant others, separating themselves from others and seeking release through physical or emotional means. Only one teacher mentioned the use of specific relaxation techniques as a way of dealing with stress.

XII: DO YOU HAVE A SUPPORT NETWORK?

Twenty-three of the twenty-four teachers have a support network. The teacher who did not have one interpreted the question in the strictest sense. For her, a positive response would have indicated a set formal network --- an organized group.

> I try to resolve my problems on my own whenever possible. My colleagues are there when I need them but no set network.

While this particular teacher perceives that she has only an informal network, she does have support when she needs it.

The remaining twenty-three teachers interpreted the question in a rather informal manner except for one who described a professional support group which had operated in the past.

> What we tried to do .., was to keep it to professional problems. We first started with an agenda.... At the beginning of the meeting, we would say, "Who would like to put something on the agenda to talk about?" and then try to keep it on a fairly tight schedule and not get off the track. It really did work well ... and I'm really sorry it has kind of dropped by the wayside....

Though she no longer has a formal set network, the preceding teacher does have, at present, a viable informal network that provides her with the support that she needs.

Of the twenty-three teachers who responded positively to this question, seventeen indicated that colleagues were a vital part of their support network.

> This staff that I work with is a really great staff. When somebody's in need, they'll really go to their rescue. And I'm the kind of person --- I can talk if I'm really bugged by something. I don't feel intimidated about how I'm doing things. I can go to someone and say, "I'm having a problem with this.... Do you have any suggestions?" I've gotten good ideas that way.

> I didn't understand, as a new teacher, the importance of interacting with the other teachers --- sharing ideas and I learned that valuable lesson the first year. I wound up, I can remember, not even knowing some of their names and just being horrified at myself for not having taken the time and the interest to learn their first and last names the first week.... I can remember that and making a mental note and saying, "Oh, you don't do that again and be sure to interact and offer materials and exchange materials." ... I think that's important because then, when you have a problem, you've established those ties. Someone will come through to rescue you and help you.... We all need that kind of thing. There are some isolationists in education; there's a couple in our school right now who are totally unto themselves. I feel sorry for them because they're not having the benefit of sharing ideas and they don't have a back-up.

While colleagues were considered to be of most importance to the teachers, fourteen of the respondents identified their families as a vital part of their support networks. Twelve of the teachers indicated that their husbands were very supportive while one specifically mentioned her own children.

> ... my kids ... will very often say, "Well Mom has tests to correct. Let's leave her alone." Or, I'll come in and they'll say, "Well, how was your day, Mom?" And I'll say, "Oh, absolutely horrible!" And they'll say, "Okay, take your fifteen minutes." ... I used to have a rule, especially when they were real little --- give me fifteen minutes by myself just to collect myself together and they were pretty good at that when they were little and now they're real good about that.

When one of the teachers identified her husband as her support system, she also identified her principal within the same response.

> My principal and my husband. They both seem to know when I'm down and need a warm fuzzy. I think I'm very visual --- I don't hide feelings. They both read me very well. I wish my principal would tell me some things I'm doing wrong. I know there are some areas for growth. My husband keeps me down to earth. I couldn't do without them --- either one.

In total, seven teachers believe that their principals are a vital link in their respective support networks. Six teachers cited non-teach-

ing friends while four identified relatives other than husbands. These included a mother, a father, an aunt, a sister and a mother-in-law. Other responses were shared only once: the students at school, a cleaning lady, school specialists, a babysitter, volunteer mothers and clerical aides.

> Also, in my classroom, I have hired a lady to come in Monday mornings for three hours and I pay her out of my time and she runs off all my dittos, opens my letters. She organizes my reading files. On Monday, I have my lesson plans done for the entire week. She runs off anything that I need.... I have a special student every week. I go right down the alphabet. I don't know if they have figured it out but everyone will be a student of the week and she takes their picture and they dictate a story to her so every week I have a new child up on the board....

Whereas answers varied from teacher to teacher, all believe that they need someone to whom to turn.

> I feel I have someone to go to for different aspects of my life that need talking about. I know who to go to.

> Not until you asked me that question did I realize I had a support network --- I'll never forget that.

Summary

Although one teacher indicated that she did not have a formal support network, the responses indicate all have at least informal networks. The most important sources of support were other colleagues, families (especially husbands), principals and non-teaching friends.

XIII: DO YOU FEEL APPRECIATED?

Responses to this question were placed in five categories: yes, mostly, sometimes, not much and no. Nine of the teachers were categorized as "yes" respondents. Selected examples follow.

> ... I have a lot of kids that keep in contact with me.

> Yes. In spite of the fact that I'm being laid off, I know it's not because of a job not well done. But I feel appreciated in terms of what people say, things that have been written, committees that I've been asked to be on and that certainly cannot but help get a job elsewhere. There are times when I think, "Why me?" But I do feel appreciated.

> ... by the other teachers that I'm with. I think a lot of them, and I think they think a lot of me. ... that's a feeling we give one another. We do a good job and that you're appreciated.

> ... the school where I teach, the staff is really a very warm, friendly staff and we give each other a lot of support.

> I think my kids at home do. I know my husband does.

> I had emergency surgery last year and I was out of school the month of February recuperating and the kids sent me cards that they had made. When I went back, we were all in tears all day long. Every little class that came in was more excited than the next one and they just made me feel so glad to be back. ... some of them would send little cards (they made) to my house through the mail.... Teachers ... everybody in my building called me.... That month I was off I got almost two hundred get well cards. You know, that makes a person feel good about themselves. You're missed.... You're appreciated by other people.

> By my husband and by my family and by those teachers that I know quite well from my building and quite well from other buildings.

Missing from these examples are the school administrators. The last teacher cited, however, did share that a principal from her past had appreciated her.

Six of the teachers were classified in the "mostly" category. Two

of these teachers identified people who do not appreciate them.

> I had the experience of having a kid that I used to teach ... about fifteen years ago ... he came into the building ... and he brought back to me things that we had made when he was in third grade.
>
> I feel good that I was chosen (to be interviewed). I feel I do a good job but I feel good that it was appreciated.
>
> I feel like the students appreciate what I do and that's the main thing ... if you have students that are having problems, parents are a lot more critical. They feel like it's your fault or you're not doing enough.... I think it's easier when the students are progressing satisfactorily or (are doing) above average work. They (parents) appreciate it more. It's ... when you try to tell them that the child is behind, he's having problems, ... then you're not appreciated ... as much....
>
> I guess I go back to the kids.... I think they appreciate me. I don't think ... (my administrator is) the type that gives feedback --- gives real positive feedback one way or the other as far as appreciation. I have had ... a principal say that he felt ... I was an addition to the staff and that showed me I was appreciated.
>
> Yes, at school. Sometimes within the family, I feel like the cook and laundry lady but most of the time very appreciated.
>
> I think they (the staff) appreciate my work.... Many (the staff) are resentful of the special program (I'm directing). There is a lack of understanding of staff about the program.

Of particular importance among these selections, is the response which describes one teacher's perception of the staff's resentment toward her because of a special assignment she has accepted. Even so, the teacher believes that the staff does appreciate her. The validation of her positive perception is clearly supported by the majority of her colleagues who chose her as outstanding. In this case, the other teachers were able to separate openly expressed feelings of resentment from the selection process. Clearly, this example is a documentation of professional maturity on the part of the staff. The teacher, in turn, is left

with her own feelings and perceptions to deal with as she is able to do so.

The responses of six teachers were placed in the "sometimes" category. Teachers within this category perceived that approximately half of the people they dealt with appreciated them. A typical response might indicate that the parents and principal don't while the students and close teacher associates in the building do. Other selected responses are presented.

> At school I feel pretty well appreciated. At home I don't always, because you know how it is.... "Do we have to eat this?" and "Why do you have to cook that again?" You just get a little discouraged.

> Not all of the time and that creates stress. All of us need someone telling us how great we are. I get quite a bit from parents.... I don't get a feeling of being appreciated by my co-workers. I think we're so busy keeping our own lives together and keeping up with teaching and our personal lives and problems. I feel very accepted by them but I don't feel appreciated. I appreciate myself a great deal. I know that I work hard and I try ... I don't think anyone knows what I'm doing and how hard I work. I don't know that about the others either. ... I think my principal is so busy hanging on himself that he can't really reach out that much to us.

> I think that people sometimes don't understand ... the hard work ... teaching kindergarten really entails. And when they do become aware, they look at you in a different light, have a little more respect for you. Many parents that have come in to volunteer make this comment. They didn't realize that it did entail so much and ... they really think a lot of kindergarten teachers.

Of particular importance among these selections is the isolation cited by two of the teachers. With this isolation comes a lack of understanding and appreciation. However, as in the case of the kindergarten teacher, this cycle of isolation can be broken by reaching out to others.

Responses of two of the teachers were classified as "not much" and one of the teachers was classified as "no". Portions of their responses

will be shared with the most negative response last.

> Not much. I don't think parents or students at this point really appreciate us too much. I'm sure my principal does. Other people in my building do, and even other teachers outside the building do.
>
> I guess I shouldn't always look for a pat on the back but I would like to be told I did a nice job.
>
> No. I used to stay after school two or three hours a day and I used to come in early in the morning, but then I found that the days that I was late, that's all I heard about.... But nobody ever mentioned the three hours I put in ... (or) ... the Saturdays running around getting materials and extra things. And so I've cut back a bit on it. I thought, "Why bother?"

Clearly, the last teacher does not feel appreciated. When answering one of the other questions (If you had to do it all over again, would you be a teacher?), she does respond positively. However, she does state that ... "the thought of being in teaching for the rest of my life does not thrill me." Could it be that other good teachers who do not feel appreciated are thinking the same thoughts?

Summary

Twenty of the twenty-four teachers identified specific people who appreciated them or did not appreciate them, the remaining four teachers gave general kinds of responses. While seventeen teachers cited professional contacts, seven teachers identified personal contacts; four of the teachers mentioned both categories of people. Table I: Appreciation documents the specific people and numbers of times teachers did and did not feel appreciated by each. It is important to understand that each teacher usually mentioned more than one person. For example, one teacher felt appreciated by other teachers, her students, and her past principal but not by her present principal. This example is in sharp con-

trast to a second teacher who identified only her present principal who does not, in her view, appreciate her.

TABLE I : APPRECIATION

	SPECIFIC PEOPLE	YES	NO
PERSONAL	Husband	2	
	Family/Own Children	2	3
	Friends	2	
PROFESSIONAL	Parents	4	4
	Past Principals	4	
	Present Principals	1	4
	Students	6	1
	Teachers	11	2

In conclusion, what can be said? Nearly half the teachers appreciate each other or, at the very least, perceive that they are appreciated by other teachers. It is important to remember that each of these twenty-four teachers is respected by enough of her colleagues to be chosen from the building as an outstanding teacher. Though selection by colleagues is different from an individual teacher's perception of being appreciated, it seems likely that the two are positively correlated. One wonders how teachers who were not selected might answer this question.

It also seems clear that the parents and principals who work with

these teachers need to come forth and express their appreciation more frequently. The teachers, in turn, may need to share more of their achievements with parents and principals. However, many seem reluctant to do so except perhaps with colleagues. This reluctance to share the good things about their own teaching is probably a contributing cause to their perceived lack of appreciation.

XIV: WHAT KIND OF PERSON DO YOU LIKE TO WORK FOR?

The most important response cited by teachers dealt with leadership. Thirteen teachers wanted their principals to be strong leaders while twelve teachers wanted instructional leaders. Seven teachers identified both roles as being important.

Strong leadership was defined in several different ways: someone who takes on the authority of the position, is goal-oriented, is in charge, is confident and has high expectations of his or her teachers.

> I think they have to know where they're going and not feel threatened. I think they have to be a very strong individual. I look to them for strength. They have to be pretty sure of themselves.

> I worked for a person who never made a decision; it was always kind of a group decision or something. I like someone to say, "I would like to do it this way or try it my way." I like that --- that someone knows how they want their building run.... she has an idea what she wants from the school, what she would like to accomplish.

Closely linked to strong leadership was the concept of the principal as an instructional leader. This was defined in several different ways: comes into the classroom and gives teachers suggestions, identifies schoolwide problems to work on, has a definite and consistent plan of managing the school as far as discipline and goes to conferences and workshops and brings back ideas.

> Someone who is up on all the new techniques and who is interested in finding out what is going on in the universities and journals and shares this information.

> I'd like to have a principal generate ideas that give me something to work toward. I want somebody to challenge me and ... have some things going....

> ... you need someone who has insight and some concern over what's actually being taught in the classroom. ... You know for a fact you cannot see what's going on in the classroom

while you're teaching ... but the administrator gets around --- at least they're supposed to get around and they're supposed to bring back the best.... suggesting good workshops, how to ... have good inservices, multi-media material that's available.

... I had one principal that was really on top of that.... He was innovative and wanted you to try new things.... he'd come in and teach your class where you could watch him try different things.

... I like someone ... that I can go to and say, "Okay, I am having problems reaching this child on an educational level." (He should) ... have some background or something to feed me that way too, because some of them are either just good at balancing the books and taking care of the cafeteria, or some of them are just good with the kids.... (It's) hard to find a mix.

Almost as important as the area of leadership is the characteristic of flexibility. Chosen by thirteen teachers, flexibility is defined as someone who is open-minded, approachable, asks for teacher input, is willing to change procedures, doesn't get hung up on little petty things, doesn't demand all kinds of little "nitpicking" things and not tied up with a lot of rules. One of the teachers shared a compromise worked out between herself and her principal.

I hate handing in lesson plans. ... Well, I'm always complaining about it at faculty meetings and things. I'm usually joking but now he has gotten down to where we don't have to hand in lesson plan books anymore. We just have about two weeks of very easy lesson plans. It's really nice because it's so much easier than writing a novel in those little squares.

I like someone who likes to go against the grain also, you know, without being pressurized to follow every exact rule.

One of the teacher's responses was categorized as an example of flexibility and strong leadership. It describes the delicate balance which must be maintained between these two characteristics.

I want a principal who doesn't let his teachers tell him what to do so that he's always changing his mind about

> things. You know, he has one group over here that wants to do something and then another group over here and then he's always trying to appease everybody. But then again, I don't want someone who is so strict and so straight that he doesn't accept the things you have to say. I think it's really hard for an administrator to work with so many different people and come across as not being wishy-washy.

In addition to being flexible, an effective administrator needs to be supportive of his or her teachers. This characteristic was cited by ten teachers.

> (One who supports) ... you ... in front of parents but afterwards, if you are wrong, talks to you about it.

> I need a principal that I know will back me in discipline. I need a principal who will help me in dealing with parents, who will look and trust that I'm going to make the right decision. Just to kind of be beside me, not necessarily a leader but just to be there --- to assist me and that's hard to find.... That is a very, very difficult order. Guess they just don't get strong principals, I don't know.... Sometimes I think it's the place you go when you're tired of teaching....

Being organized was a characteristic which was cited by seven teachers. One of the teachers contrasted her present principal's style of organization with a principal she'd worked for in the past. Whereas her present principal wants the entire staff to plan all schedules, even bus schedules, her former principal had all the schedules worked out on the first day and placed together in a little packet.

Two of these seven teachers also cited being fair as an important characteristic of an effective administrator. They were joined by five additional teachers. Being fair was defined as not biased and giving teachers credit for everything they are doing.

> I think that when you have twenty some personalities in your building, you have to be fair. I think it's normal to like someone over someone else, but when you're an administrator, you have to be cognizant of being fair to everybody.

Six of the teachers believe that being a good listener is an essential skill for an administrator.

> I like someone who can sit and listen and not fly off the handle and get angry.

According to five of the teachers, principals should trust their effective teachers to teach. Trusting principals know that their teachers can carry on without the principal standing over them --- that effective teachers should be given free rein. This does not mean all teachers, as one of the respondents explains.

> I don't want to have to go and ask, "Is it all right?" I want them to be watching and see that I do a good job.... With free rein I don't want everyone else just doing whatever they want.... In our school we have our own people who certainly have free rein but they are not doing anything and I don't like it.... And the principal seems to let it go by.... On the other hand, I don't want him to come down on everyone.... I guess he has to discriminate as to who gets the free rein and I don't know how you can do that, ... unless you know the teachers and know what they're going to do or watch them....

Principals, according to this example, need to be able to individualize their interactions, their levels of trusting. Whereas some teachers may need more monitoring, others would find it debilitating to effective teaching.

> I have a tendency to balk if someone really pushes me hard, but, if you give me a rule and say "This is the curriculum, do it", I'll do the best job I can.

Another of the skills in the interpersonal arena is showing appreciation. Five teachers indicated that principals should show that they appreciate what their teachers do.

> ... someone who's patting you on the back occasionally and letting you know whether you're doing a good job.
>
> The principal that we had before ... showed appreciation to

the staff members. You know, she'd give out little awards or she would compliment you if it were nothing else but, "Hey, I like the outfit you've got on." She always made it a point to speak to you at least once a day if not many more times than that. And I know it wasn't just in my case. It was in everyone else's situation.

The most important characteristics of effective administrators may be loosely categorized into leadership skills, interpersonal skills and descriptions such as being organized and being fair. Much interrelationship exists between and among all areas cited. The remaining responses of teachers are outlined in Table II: Characteristics of Effective Administrators. In order to present a complete picture of teachers' responses, all characteristics, except those cited only once, are included.

For some of the characteristics additional comments or examples were shared by teachers to clarify the meanings of their responses.

Caring. Someone who is concerned about how you're doing ... not just ... in the classroom but how you're doing as a human being.... (Someone who) could feel your moods.

Handles students. I don't send kids down to the office for disciplinary measures very often. I guess mainly because I've found that a lot of principals will go, "Tsk, tsk, oh why did you do that? Well, don't do that any more." (Then they'll) ... send them back to me and the problem isn't solved.... I worked with a man ... that dealt with children beautifully.... He was a very warm person. He could be real firm, real strict --- you know, "You will do this and if you're not going to do this, then ... you're leaving this building." ... But he could ... go up to a kid and hug him (and say), "You're wonderful!"

Knowledgeable. The principal that we had before ... was always either popping in or out of your door or you saw him constantly with his finger on what was going on. He knew what you were doing. He knew what everyone else was doing and I appreciated that.

Available. I'm currently with a principal who closes his door so he can get his work done. We have no time to see him. That's tough.... (The second teacher reported from the positive side.) He worked at it. He was there from 7:00 a.m. till 5:00 p.m. If you wanted to stay after school,

TABLE II: CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATORS

CHARACTERISTICS	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	DEFINITIONS IF GIVEN
Strong leadership	13	Is in charge
Flexibility	13	Asks for teacher input, not tied up with rules
Instructional leadership	12	Gives suggestions
Supportive of teachers	10	Backs up teachers
Organized	7	
Fair	7	Gives teachers credit for what they're doing
Good listener	6	
Trusts their effective teachers to teach	5	Knows which teachers are doing the job and lets them do it
Shows appreciation	5	Uses positive reinforcement with teachers
Caring	5	Is concerned
Consistent	3	Somebody who carries through
Positive	3	Is enthusiastic and enjoys the job
Handles students	3	Warm yet firm
Knowledgeable	3	Knows what's going on in the community, the school district and the school

CHARACTERISTICS	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	DEFINITIONS IF GIVEN
Outlines clear expectations	3	Makes clear, reasonable demands
Available	2	One who keeps the office door open
Sense of humor	2	Uses humor in a positive way
Gives negative feedback	2	Gives negative feedback based on observable data

> you knew he was there in the building. You didn't have to say, "Hey, I'm staying a couple of hours late." ... you knew he was there if you wanted to go and talk to him, . . or if you wanted to feel a little secure knowing that someone else was in the building, he was there.
>
> Sense of humor. ... a person who ... can ... bring ... a stressful situation to a humorous point.... somebody who is fun to be with and to be around. They can let loose and just enjoy being with teachers.
>
> Gives negative feedback. I don't know that I've ever had a principal that came down on people the way he should.... (For example, teachers are supposed to take students to the bus.) They don't take them to the bus.... and it does create a problem for everyone else.... Maybe right now that's probably the most important thing I see the principal doing ...

The remaining comments shared by teachers were only cited once each. Principals should be good communicators, have a strong sense of moral values and be continual learners, hard workers and evaluators (not afraid to get rid of the "deadwood".)

Summary

Teachers in this study believe that effective administrators should be strong yet flexible leaders. Principals should also assume the role of instructional leader. They should be supportive of their teachers, organized, fair and good listeners. Principals should trust their effective teachers to teach, show their appreciation to teachers and care about their teachers.

XV: IF YOU COULD ESTABLISH AN IDEAL SCHOOL, WHAT WOULD IT BE LIKE?

Fifteen of the teachers believe that the most important ingredient in an ideal school is a dedicated, cohesive group of teachers. These teachers would be positive, caring, real, enthusiastic and hard-working. There would be a high level of cooperation among these teachers, a willingness to share their expertise with each other and a desire to solve problems and plan curriculum together.

> I would probably take teachers that ... I thought really have the children at heart.... It doesn't really make any difference what kind of children you have. It's just what kind of relationship the teacher has with the students, what kind of dedication.... (A few years ago there were) two teachers that I taught in between --- it was just so nice to be near someone that you thought was working just as hard as you were....
>
> ... a staff that talks to each other and is willing to cooperate --- at least be able to sit down and talk about the way things ... should be handled without somebody getting all upset and bent out of shape and "Well, I don't do it that way" and "I'm not going to do it that way." ... And I would like a staff that would treat all the kids in the building as these are all our kids and if you see a kid doing well, great! Tell him. If you see a kid who is misbehaving, help take care of the problem; don't just sit back and let it go.... there are a few people in the building who will discipline and there are some people who will discipline every once in a while and then there are some people who will sit back and close their doors or will stand in the hall and turn their backs on a problem....
>
> We (the staff) observe one another with those kind of tools (observational tools).... Do you have closure on your lesson? What kind of questions did you ask? ... I think we educators learn but don't practice once we get to teaching because there are so many management skills and evaluation skills that we don't use. If we would team and do this for one another on a periodic basis, I think we would improve.
>
> The staff would be made up of teachers that were anxious to come to school and were concerned about the children when they got there and were willing to go the extra little bit that children need....

I would like to see teachers have time to sit down with one another, not at a teachers' meeting, but maybe ... (once a week for a half day). Kids could be there but maybe it could be some kind of coordinated program with paraprofessionals or something like that, where the teachers, all of them together, are planning where we are headed or where we are going.

I think I need somebody in my perfect school like ... the person I teach with.... We teach well together because we both contribute something to that. We do a lot of team teaching, not that we share each other's kids as much but we share ideas so much and we tend to do our social studies and our science units together....

Really with teachers who are like myself that really enjoy what they do and think it's important working with kids. I guess that's maybe an ego thing, that you feel in life that you're doing something important when you're working with kids.

I would like to see more planning among teachers. I did team teaching ... and for myself I found a very valuable experience.... it was really funny. I think we knew what the other person was capable of and even if one would get up in the morning to explain things, neither of us said I will explain this. It just sort of came from one or the other. I was sort of the idea person and she was very good at carrying it out. She was very artistic.... I would generally do all the planning and make a list of what I was going to do and make her list for her. Not everyone could do this obviously. I think this would be nice if two people felt, I'm not sure you could do a whole building this way.

(In) ... an ideal school you have to have a lot of different kinds of good teachers. You have to have one teacher who is good in an area --- so that when a teacher needs help on a science unit, she can go to her and this teacher is willing to give extra information.

I would like to see teachers' talents used more, somebody to do my math for me. I feel inadequate in that right now but maybe in a year or two I will feel more comfortable.

The emphasis in the preceding examples is on the group --- teachers caring enough about each other and the entire school to come out of their cubbyholes and work together. Clearly, these teachers see the value and the power of a dedicated, cohesive staff in contrast to the

efforts of one lone dedicated teacher. Flowing from this clear preference is the second ingredient in their ideal school.

Second only to a dedicated, cohesive staff is the necessity of school-wide goals. Twelve teachers believe that their ideal school should have a definite purpose or sense of mission. They spoke about a sense of unity which can prevail in such a school.

> ... main goal would be the uniqueness of all children and it would be child-centered. The curriculum wouldn't be quite so book-oriented and it wouldn't depend on a set of textbooks that a publishing company has produced.... I would like to see multigrade classes.... a lot of planning that would go into a general school rather than all of us in our little cubbyholes which I probably feel more comfortable doing.... I would like to see the curriculum not separate subjects but one dependent upon another. I would like to see emphasis on thinking skill development as much as the academic.
>
> This school would have some fun things for kids like a field day, like somebody coming in maybe to entertain.
>
> ... I would like an open building with learning stations.... And I guess, to me, that would be an ideal school --- everyone down on their knees doing projects and ... having the kids able to do what they wanted to do whether it's woodworking or just feeding to a lot of different learning situations.... There is a philosophy there. I mean, you don't want to be there if you want to close your door.
>
> I would like to see a school where there is a definite curriculum. I have been to schools where it's do your own thing in reading or science or math ... and I keep going back to the ... teacher's guide to where everything is set up and we can't all go our own ways.
>
> ... it's awfully nice to see children of different ages working together successfully. And I hate to say, "You can only play with an eight-year-old and you a nine-year-old." And this is a kind of idea we give to children.... I would like to see more group things done whether assemblies or where children have a chance to get together.... I think it's a comradery that children need --- not so many boxes for hours.
>
> I'd like a lot of cross-grade teaching. One year a fifth grade teacher had her kids develop some lessons and came

down and taught them to my kids. It was such a good experience for those fifth graders and my third graders got really excited about it.

Additional goals cited by teachers included a multicultural curriculum, a strong academic program, a unified discipline program, an emphasis placed on the emotional health of the students, teaching for mastery and the cultivation of high teacher expectations for their respective students.

The next most important ingredient in an ideal school is an effective principal. Eight teachers believe that the principal should be the instructional leader.

> And then a principal who would sit down with the staff and say, "Okay, we need a program. What's our program going to be? ... This is what we've got to deal with. Now what extra things can we pull ... in?"

> You would probably see an administrator doing tasks ... that are not normal administrative tasks, you know, being involved in curriculum planning....

> To have those tools that our principal is so good at in terms of measuring results and that's important. We observe one another with those kinds of tools.

In addition to having the support of an effective principal, seven teachers indicated that active parental involvement is very important. They believe that it is essential to reach out to parents and include them.

> I would like to establish parent committees. Parent involvement is very difficult to get nowadays. They just don't like to come and get involved and I don't know how I'd do it, but I would try everything I know to get the parents involved in the school. I'd like parents to come in and work with the kids --- do flash cards, do practice work with the kids, art work with the kids. And I'd like the parents to come into school because the kids are our best newspaper going home --- our best advertisement. If they go home with good things and the parents see good things going on, then I think schools'

reputations would get back to where they used to be.

> ... I would hope that parents would support us more and have their children ... in bed at a decent time instead of coming to school sleepy....

In addition to people resources (parents, teachers and principals), respondents believe that a good physical plant is essential. Six teachers cited the importance of supportive physical facilities. This includes the acquisition of supplies and equipment such as computers, the development of an excellent multi-media center where materials get used and a colorful and clean physical plant.

> ... I would like to see classrooms that are much larger so the children can have a quiet place to go, if they want to be away by themselves --- a place where they can really get messy if the children want to, a comfortable place to be.

> Clean --- that comes at the top of my list. They've made so many cutbacks that we only get our rooms cleaned every other day. And even then, they're not cleaned that well.... Color --- lots of color. Our building ... has been in the process of being painted now for a year. They're finally getting it all done. We chose colors on lockers --- red and yellow --- things to brighten up. We're in an older building.

Six of the teachers discussed the importance of utilizing community resources. They believe that the school must extend itself into the community to provide sound learning experiences for its students.

> I would invite outside people to come in. I'd invite the mayor to come in to ... teach a half day with the school. I would like industry people to come in, business. I think school is much more than that building within itself. I think you have to reach out to the total community and get them involved. Field trips --- I think they are very important. I think our children need to experience museums and art shows and zoos and things that many of our kids don't get to go to. We don't have field trips now because we don't have buses.

Whereas cutbacks in field trips have adversely affected many schools, the cutbacks in total curricular offerings have had even a

greater impact. As a result, five of the teachers yearn for the art, music, gym, and full library service which have been cut from their programs. One of the teachers felt that students should have the opportunity to learn a foreign language.

Another victim of cutbacks has been the school specialist --- the counselor, the social worker and the psychologist. Thus, another ingredient in the ideal school is a simple restoration of those essential support services previously enjoyed by schools. Four teachers cited this particular need.

> I would like counselors in elementary school. I'd like social workers there. It's my theory that the kids that are having difficulty in junior high and high school are the same kids that had difficulty in elementary school. To me that's the place to start solving these problems. By the time they're in junior high school --- to me it's almost too late for them. I would prefer helping them in my ideal elementary school.

One of the teachers talked about the role of the principal in dealing with troubled students and the varying degrees of effectiveness which she has seen. Most principals have not had the specific training which a specialist has had. Even if they have had the training, few find the time it takes to work with disruptive students.

Related to the preceding concern is the next ingredient of an ideal school --- children who want to learn. Four teachers believe that school should be a place where children like to come for the purpose of learning. If children don't wish to come for that purpose, then they shouldn't attend school.

> I also in my ideal school would get rid of children who disrupt and misbehave and I'd send them home until someone can reassure me that they will not continue in that manner. Now, the school should be a privilege in life --- that's the way it should be....

The underlying assumption of the preceding solution is one of parental responsibility, intervention and positive interaction with the school. Parents were not actually mentioned by these four teachers.

The remaining responses to this question were only cited once with the exception of the first three examples, which two teachers discussed. Some examples* will be clarified through an additional explanation at the end of this list.

1. Teachers who use a variety of approaches.
2. Smaller class sizes.
*3. Alternative administrative arrangements.
4. Cooperation between elementary and secondary schools.
*5. Small neighborhood school.
6. Stable student population.
7. Teachers trained for an open environment.
8. Higher salaries for teachers.
9. University students involved with public school teachers.
10. Pre-school entrance exam before kindergarten.
11. Flex planning time for teachers before or after school.
*12. Support from administrators at top levels.
13. Custodians who care about children.
14. Teachers who are organized.
15. Teachers who eat lunch with their students.
16. Stimulating workshops for teachers.
17. Volunteers and aides to work with students.
*18. Creative school lunch programs.
19. Noon outdoor programs.
20. Teachers who are flexible.

21. Master plan for each grade level at the school district level.

22. Environment which encourages innovative teaching.

23. Maximum contact time between teachers and students.

Alternative administrative arrangements. I would have no administrator but I would have a business manager. I think the teachers can run the building but I think we need a person to run the mechanical things about it --- getting the supplies, paying the bills.... (The second teacher suggested a different plan.) ... maybe not even having an administrator --- a rotation (of teachers). I could see that could work.

Small neighborhood school. I still personally think that a good neighborhood school is the best bet. I think you need to have families that are comfortable and can use that school other than just sending their kids to it. I think that school has to be part of the community....

Support from administrators at top levels. I would want administrators on the top level who were supportive and who really tried to see that children who have problems had the best placement, even if the parents didn't agree,... There are some parents who refuse to see problems in children and it is so hard for those children.

Creative school lunch programs. A creative school lunch program could integrate holiday and ethnic foods with classroom units.

Summary

The question about the establishment of an ideal school does contain a sense of building toward the future. Thus, it is important to understand that many of the teachers discussed the past rather than the future. This orientation of the teachers is not surprising given the serious cutbacks suffered by schools in recent years. For many of the teachers the past was better with a greater number of curricular offerings and the availability of school specialists. In addition, some of the teachers believe that parental involvement was greater in the past.

On the positive side, teachers have identified their four top re-

sponses.

1. A dedicated, cohesive group of teachers.
2. School-wide goals.
3. Principals as instructional leaders.
4. Active parental involvement.

These responses are positive because school improvement can be accomplished if teachers, principals and parents work toward common goals as a team.

XVI: IF YOU HAD TO DO IT ALL OVER AGAIN, WOULD YOU BE A TEACHER?

Twenty-three of the twenty-four teachers indicated that they would do it all over again. One of the teachers indicated that she didn't know. Her response had more to do with present opportunities for women and minorities than any negative feelings toward teaching as a profession.

> I don't know. When I first graduated, it seems that the only fields that were open to females were teaching and nursing. I believe I could have gone on to another profession. I don't think I would have chosen teaching if other areas had been open to females and blacks then.

One of the other teachers shared some of the same thoughts even though she indicated that she would choose teaching again if given the chance.

> I'd like to know what I would have chosen if I had been a chooser, if I'd been more agressive. ... I would like to know sometimes what other things I could do. I'm not down on teaching. I respect it highly. I'd just like to know what I would have been had I not been a teacher.... (My guidance counselor) didn't exactly say, "You'd be a great engineer", not that perhaps that would have worked but I would have liked to have had those attitudes then when I was getting out of high school. I don't think any of the girls did really, not that I can remember.

Changing role expectations for women is a phenomenon which all of the teachers in the study have experienced. Given the fact that all are female and over half are in the 41-55 age range, this change has been a significant factor in their lives.

Whereas only two teachers linked societal changes to choosing a different profession, a third teacher would have integrated the profession of teaching with one that had been more male-oriented in the past.

> ... If I were a young person now.... I would get my teaching degree and I would also get a degree in law and have both.... I'd still want to be a teacher but in private law practice and I would try to specialize in the area of school

> law ... nowadays parents are so quick to sue teachers over any little thing and ... I think that I could have more of a feel for the situation than just a lawyer who has not been involved in the school ritual itself.

The preceding ideas shared are provocative, especially if teachers entering the profession begin to think about possible role combinations and integrations. That possibility, however, is problematic, given the tremendous adjustments one must make to even one new role. This evolution from a beginning level teacher to the mastery level was described by four of the teachers when responding to the question.

> Once I said no, never, because of the time and energy I put into it wasn't benefiting. That was perhaps ten years ago. Now I would say I was teaching to full capacity and I do like teaching.

> Yes, I would. Definitely. And I haven't always been able to say that.... The more years I've taught, I've felt that way. In the beginning I think it was real hard and there were times that I thought, "What am I doing in this profession? I should be doing something else." ... I think it takes a long time to become a good teacher and I think it takes a lot of experience.... I think I've always done a good job.... but I realize over the years how much better I'm doing.... Maybe, as I've gotten older, I've gotten a more positive concept.

> I think of myself right now as a very warm person with the children and enjoying physical contact.... But when I first started out, it was very difficult for me.... As a matter of fact, physical contact of children bothered me at first and I think back I don't know how that could be but I wasn't used to people being around me and I think that is one thing maybe you have to get used to --- you know, when you have ten children and especially in the first grade and they are all calling your name....

> The first couple of years I taught I didn't like it much at all ... and maybe it just had to do with being a first year teacher. I took every sick day I had the first couple of years just because I needed those mental health days. I needed to get away.... I started really liking it (teaching) when I found out that I didn't have to follow a role model of something that wasn't comfortable for me. I think the first few years I was doing like maybe teachers I had had, like the person that had taught next to me and then I finally

found out that I could really be at ease with kids and ... then I started really liking my job.

This recollection of the past documents an earlier stage of teaching which has been described as the Beginning or Survival Stage while later stages have been categorized as the Middle and Mastery Stages (Watts, 1980). For the most part, these teachers' responses would best be categorized under the latter stage.

> Yes, definitely --- definitely --- no question in my mind.... I love teaching. I really get turned on.... When I taught first grade reading, that was the most exciting thing to me --- to teach a kid to read. I would be on a high for days. It was so exciting. I miss that now teaching the upper grades. But I have different kinds of rewards in upper grades. I see a kid sit down at a computer, program it and it works and I see their delight that they've accomplished that and that's a high for me too. I get a lot of highs out of teaching.

> Sure would.... I want to be in the classroom. Because my day is just winged when I go in there. It's over before I know it and the day that that stops, then I'll know it is time for me to leave. The day the days start dragging, then I'll know I've done all I can do and I better change.

In contrast to the positive evolution of stages toward a mastery level, leaving the profession and the steps that precede it suggest a somber stage --- one of loss for the profession in the case of a teacher who has had a positive impact. Two of the teachers in this study are contemplating that possibility, even though they would be teachers if they had it to do all over again.

> Today, I would say yes. There are days when I would say no way. And I --- frankly, I'm thinking ... my sister lives in Texas and ... she's talking to me about starting up a business in Texas. And I'm seriously thinking about it.... I'm going to be forty in four years and the thought of being in teaching the way teaching is going now scares me to death.... I'm thinking --- if I'm forty and I'm still in teaching, then I'm going to be there forever.... the thought of being in teaching for the rest of my life does not thrill me --- unfortunately.

> I've gotten a lot of rewards out of it.... So yes, I'd do it again. I would say that eighteen of my twenty years have been terrific. But I'm dead --- I don't mean dead --- I'm ready to go.

For both teachers the analogy of death creeps into their words. While the first is merely contemplating possibilities, the second teacher seems to have made her decision. Given their contributions to the teaching profession over the years, the loss of one or both is a loss which is very serious in nature.

Summary

Of the twenty-four teachers who responded to this question, twenty-three of the teachers indicated that they would again enter the teaching profession if given the opportunity. This response is quite different from the conclusion reached in the Feistritzer Report (March, 1983) that more than one third of our present teachers, if they had to do it over, would not choose teaching again.

Selected References

Feistritzer, Emily C. "Crisis in U. S. Role As World Leader Looms As Caliber of New Teachers Drops", Teacher Education Reports, V. 5 (March 17, 1983), p. 1.

Watts, Heidi. "Starting Out, Moving On, Running Ahead", Teacher's Centers Exchange. Occasional Paper No. 8, Second Edition, November, 1980.

XVII: WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A PERSON WHOM YOU FEEL IS AN OUTSTANDING TEACHER?

The most important characteristic identified by teachers was that of caring. It was said in many different ways by the thirteen teachers who gave it as one of their responses to the question. A teacher who cares is one who is kind, child-oriented, humanistic, cares about the job, puts students first, carries work home if she needs to, is dedicated and committed.

Nine of the respondents believe that a teacher must be innovative in order to be outstanding. They believe that teachers must be aware of trends, willing to change with the times, flexible, creative, and willing to try new techniques and integrate them into their teaching.

> The first year I taught.... I went into a school where this lady was celebrating her 25th year of teaching the same grade in the same classroom. I couldn't believe it! And she was just as stagnant as could be. She was using dittoes and materials that were so old that I said right then "No, uh-uh, that's not the ticket." I made that decision right then. I would never, ever do that. So I think you have to be aware of trends and keep moving.

Being organized was identified as a characteristic by seven of the teachers. This was cited in connection with teachers who like to plan, are effective planners, are structured and are able to fit everything into their programs.

Seven of the respondents believe it is very important that teachers feel good about themselves. Teachers need to be confident, happy, and comfortable with themselves and with their students. They shouldn't take themselves too seriously and they should be able to let loose. In addition, teachers should feel relaxed enough to let their students know about their personal lives.

(An outstanding teacher) ... is not uptight. This person can stand mistakes. If a kid drops paint on your shoe, you accept that. Okay, that's what happens in elementary school.

I like teachers who feel really comfortable with kids. I can never understand teachers who never want to mention their own families at school. I mean why not? You have to be human. I think that kids need to know that you have kids, not that I talk about my family all of the time, but if they ask me, I tell them.

Whereas the top four characteristics are personal attributes which these teachers probably brought with them to the teaching profession, the ways in which they are defined can provide evidence of their existence. Thus, one might review teacher plans and interview students in order to verify the existence of these characteristics. With one or two exceptions, the remaining characteristics identified by teachers are more elusive to verify except, perhaps, through direct classroom observation. They are outlined in Table III: Characteristics of Outstanding Teachers. In order to present a complete picture of the teachers' responses, the top four characteristics are also included.

For some of the characteristics additional comments or examples were shared by teachers to clarify the meanings of their responses.

Effective communicator. I think they have to be articulate ....this (is) something that I've always wished to be, very articulate, really quick on my feet and quick with the words. That I look for --- someone who can really express themselves well and get themselves across to the kids in their language.

Continual learner. I just got back from this reading conference which was just a wonderful thing and it really was a good booster for the middle of the year. I learned so much and there are so many neat people and I got all kinds of good ideas.... I think you need to want to keep getting more new ideas.

High expectations of students. I like teachers who try to challenge students.... I think that every student can do a lot more than we think he can do....

TABLE III: CHARACTERISTICS OF OUTSTANDING TEACHERS

CHARACTERISTICS	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	DEFINITIONS IF GIVEN
Caring	13	Take work home if necessary
Innovative	9	Integrate new techniques into their teaching
Organized	7	Able to fit all subjects into their programs
Feel good about themselves	7	Tell students about their personal lives
Like their students	6	
Know their material/ subject matter	6	Knowledgeable of their subject matter and can get it across
Effective communicators	5	Good listeners, simplify ideas so students can understand, explain ideas clearly
Sense of humor	5	Joke around with students, fun to be with
Continual learners	5	Read professional materials, attend courses, conferences, and in-service training
Warm	4	Not aloof, huggable, willing to touch students and get involved

CHARACTERISTICS	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	DEFINITION IF GIVEN
Fair	4	Make reasonable demands
Patient	4	
Enthusiastic	4	Enjoy what they're doing
Open	4	Accept new ideas, willing to listen to other viewpoints
Effective classroom managers	3	Allow children independence without losing control, strict
Never give up	3	Willing to go beyond the minimum, to give the extra mile
Consistent	3	
High expectations of students	3	Challenge their students to do their best and get the best out of their students
People-oriented	3	Perceptive to personal problems, concerned about the personality of the child, interested in people
Positive	3	See the best in each student, look on the positive side of things
Maintain good relationships with students and staff	2	

CHARACTERISTICS	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	DEFINITION IF GIVEN
Evaluation skills	2	Able to diagnose learning problems, know how to evaluate effective teaching
Honest	2	
Provide service at the school or district level	2	
Provide leadership at the school or district level	2	Involved in the planning of curriculum, revising report cards and securing parent involvement

> Enthusiasm. ... I like people who enjoy what they're doing and I am finding more and more times in the lounge nowadays --- it's hard for a lot of teachers to say, "Boy, I had a good day today", and "Boy, I really like what I'm doing." It's harder all the time to hear that. And it bothers me --- it really does. It's really getting harder and harder out there everyday.
>
> Never give up. An ideal teacher ... is someone who goes that extra mile without trying to get a pat on the back for it, you know, a real gut feeling. They just say, "I've gotta do this." ... (They) know that if they don't do it, this child may not ever get the opportunity to do it again.... I think an ideal teacher is a teacher who ... takes each day as the most important day ... because you're not guaranteed that that child will be with you the next day.

The remaining comments shared by teachers were only cited once each. They include: accepts all kinds of children, has time for children, fosters an attitude where students are accepting of each other, is calm, is intelligent, cares about self, follows the curriculum in sequence, individualizes and has outside interests. Of particular interest is the ex-

planation about caring for self.

> Outstanding people would ... care about themselves, their looks.... I look around and I see some teachers who come to school and they don't even look like they combed their hair or they don't care what they grabbed out of their closet and I think, what kind of an impression are they making on children? You've got to care about yourself in order to care about them.

Summary

A profile of an outstanding teacher can be formulated from the responses of the teachers in this study. The teacher would be a caring, innovative and organized person. In addition, teachers who matched this profile would feel good about themselves, like their students, know their subject matter and how to get it across, be effective communicators, have a sense of humor and be continual learners.

XVIII: WHAT CAN BE DONE TO MAKE TEACHING A MORE HIGHLY RESPECTED PROFESSION?

Thirteen of the respondents in the study believe that teachers must convey a positive public image. This was defined in several different ways: as educating the parents and community, as positive press coverage and as doing a good job of public relations. Two of the teachers described a conflict which they perceived between a "union image" and a professional image.

> I'm bothered with the union image. I should be very happy that the union is looking out for my interest and certainly I need that but I become upset with union tactics. I guess if I had to strike and walk the picket line, I would have some real anxieties. I don't see how I could stand and walk in front of children and parents. I can't come to grips with that.
>
> I think the public perceives us sometimes as a bunch of rebels who only know salaries and strikes. And that bothers me a lot. The union has been ... wonderful as far as teacher rights and protection but in a way it has hurt our image....

A third teacher expanded on this conflict.

> We have a lousy public relations going on. I don't think enough credit is given to the positive things that are happening in education and I think when we hear of something negative, everyone goes to pieces. Wow, this is going on, I'm not going to vote for a millage.... Maybe we need to get out there and give more positive aspects of what is happening in the classroom. I don't think teachers are real good at that. Somewhere along the line we have really downgraded ourselves and what's coming out is that all we want is money.

Other teachers developed related points which deal with the overall issue of projecting a positive image.

> You go into groups and downgrade teaching. Persons in the group know you're a teacher. You're certainly not helping the profession.... If I have problems, I try not to take it on out into the public and do anything that would make us look bad. If things aren't right, there are people you voice these opinions to --- not always the public.

> Teachers need to be careful of what they say and do --- (like) smoking in the lounge with the window open.
>
> I do have some concerns about what a lot of people think of education. I find ... when I was first a new teacher, I was so excited to tell everybody that I was a teacher. I'm not that willing to say I'm a teacher any more just because we are not looked upon as the same any more. I don't know why but I just think that maybe we have become logs. Maybe some of us who have been teachers for so long --- we are just kind of sitting back and not doing all we can.

Linked closely to the issue of public relations is the concept of teachers as professionals. In a very real sense this is the foundation stone upon which the whole profession rests. This is the important good news which is needed if the overall image of the profession is to be enhanced. The word "professional" was defined in many different ways. Teachers who are professional:

1. care about their appearance and dress
2. are accountable for what they are teaching
3. respect each other's differences
4. are prepared to change when something isn't working
5. ask for help when they need it
6. are continual learners
7. respect their own jobs.

In total, ten respondents believe that teachers should be professional.

> I guess a sense of professionalism isn't always there which would help to improve the profession. Professionalism as far as --- let's see --- your demeanor, your English, the way you conduct yourself, your knowledge of subject matter, which I think happens with the pink slipping. And where do we find a place for this teacher? And all of a sudden they're in fifth grade when they've been teaching fourth grade for ninety years and then it's up to the person themselves.
>
> ... I think of a teacher's dress and attire and their decor- em ... if I went to school in blue jeans and tennis shoes, I

just don't think that I would be as professional acting as I think I should be. I wear pantsuits but everything coordinates. I think that our own lax behavior and (lack of) dignity and our attire --- the kids have picked that up. I think that we've lost a lot of the character and respect the profession used to have --- partly because we don't have respect for ourselves.

But when I think of teaching when I was growing up, as far as when I wanted to be a teacher or teachers I respected, there was always something special about them, either the way they acted or the way they looked. They were a little above and beyond the cut.

Another way to restore the professional image of the teacher is to "get rid of the deadwood". Nine teachers identified this issue when responding to the last question.

I see tenure as --- one part of me wants to say I see it as a good thing because I think it could become a political thing in who's evaluating you. Another part of me says that when you're burned out, get out.

... no matter how close you are in working with someone, you never have the same objectives, but you're still reaching for the top. You may be going along a different mountain trying to get there, but you're still reaching for the top. And also, if they are teachers who are not reaching for the top and I mean in every area, they need to just be weeded out.... there has got to be somebody around who is going to be concerned enough to do this.... I think the administrators need to take on a more serious look ... would they want that teacher to teach their child ... in order for us to stay on top, you've got to get rid of some of the weeds.

... I've seen too many teachers that I don't think should be in classrooms ... but no one knows how to --- or no one cares to get them out. You should get them out. I think evaluators have to be competent observers. I don't think many of them know what they're doing and I would even consider outsiders --- Oakland staff coming in --- they don't know me, they aren't prejudiced for me or against me. They come in and make observations and send me two or three or four.

... get rid of the deadwood and that's the main thing and I don't know how to do that because if you're going to get rid of the deadwood, you're going to have to get rid of the unions and I don't think we are going to be able to do that.

I think the union has got its priorities backwards.... I think they're more into being unionized ... as opposed to getting rid of the real problem.... the union likes to blanket, you know, put a big umbrella over everybody and protect everybody. Well, believe you me, everybody should not be protected.

Equal to the "deadwood issue" is the concern about teacher education programs. Nine teachers believe that colleges and universities must do a better job of preparing future teachers. One recommendation was tighter screening procedures, especially at the beginning and the end. Additional concerns were described.

... more on-site training ... a longer student teaching period.... Maybe less theory and more practical classes would ... make the teacher more prepared for the first year.

I do think that people on campus should be very careful to counsel out people that seem inappropriate.... I had a girl ... and she failed her student teaching. She was so inappropriate and everyone admitted she was inappropriate.... And the gal (university supervisor) that came along to introduce them all said, "Oh, she probably is going to have a hard time." Hard time! She was terrible! ... the thing that angered me ... (was) why couldn't somebody on campus have seen that and why did they let this girl get to her senior year and then I'm the hatchet guy?

Maybe I just needed more courses. Maybe it should have been six years instead of four. And how many of us would have stuck through the six years?

Four of the teachers believe that there should be a different funding base for education. They felt that the profession should be in the hands of educators rather than parents and the community.

... parents see education as a place where, "Okay, we're paying for it so we ought to have a say on what's going on."

Other funding could perhaps provide equal monies for all kids regardless of area.

I think what happens is that, obviously, millages are not a popular issue.... whenever there's a millage election, they write terrible things about how we're lazy and all that kind

> of stuff.... I think that if there was another way of funding it where the public didn't have as much to say about it, I think you'd probably get some respect back ... because ... that's the one area where they can ... have some say.

Linked to the issue of control is the first response about the image of the profession. In so many ways the responses of teachers are interwoven by this most significant issue.

Teachers in mentorship roles is another of the many responses linked to the overall image of the teacher. This role is not the same as being supportive of each other. The three teachers who shared this response did so from the perspective that a given teacher would reach out to a fellow teacher in need. Thus, the mentor would initiate rather than passively waiting to be asked.

> Maybe what would be helpful would be to have ... an older teacher take a new teacher as a big sister.... You could tell them how to do this or what papers had to be handed in or how you did a lesson.

> And if something isn't happening across the hall that you think should be, maybe you need to include that teacher in on some of the things you're doing and sometimes that is incentive enough.

Three of the teachers identified another issue which, like so many of the others, relates back to the overall image of the profession --- the "infusion of new blood" into the teaching ranks. This issue is particularly important for the teachers in this study since both school districts are experiencing problems with layoffs.

> ... another thing that just hit me this year, that I can't believe that I was so slow in understanding, I've been in the school system fifteen years and I am in the youngest group they cut off.... There are younger people than me, by far, but we don't have any new blood coming up, so there's no one behind us. The wolves are not there either biting at our heels or saying, "Oh, we can do it, we can do it, we can do it", which is what we had for years.... And you were

inspired by those people.

> And we're losing all the new young ones and as much as I hate to compete with the young ones, they're good.... it's like an old shoe. We're comfortable it it.... when all those young ones were coming in with all their good ideas and their new philosophies, whether it worked or not, let's try this idea, let's try that idea, it kept everybody on their toes. Maybe it's just that we've got too many of us old ones in there that we just think it doesn't matter any more.

One answer to the preceding issue is a good inservice program for senior level teachers. Three of the respondents believe that principals need to encourage their teachers to upgrade their skills. This might take place by principals suggesting inservice workshops or offering teachers assistance in improving their instructional skill levels. This assistance, one of the teachers points out, should be separated from the regular evaluation process which principals do.

Teachers in the study identified many more ways in which teaching could be a more highly respected profession.

1. Teachers should set higher expectations for their students (three teachers).
2. Teachers need to be paid higher salaries (three teachers).
3. Parents and community members need to be involved in the schools (two teachers).
4. Class sizes should be smaller (two teachers).
5. Money should be available for school materials (one teacher).
6. Poor administrators should be "weeded out" (one teacher).
7. Special science teachers should be teaching science at the elementary level (one teacher).
8. Once every five years principals should return to the classroom for at least a month (one teacher).

9. Central administration should be more involved at a building level (one teacher).
10. Creative ways of teaching should be encouraged (one teacher).
11. The State should require teachers to continuously update their certificates.

The respondent who offered the last suggestion felt that teachers need to continue attending workshops and taking courses in order to retain their certificates. In addition, the respondent suggested that course instructors and workshop leaders need to follow up their instruction to see if teachers are using the new skills which they learned.

Summary

Respondents in this study identified four top issues which teachers, administrators and teacher educators need to be working on in a collaborative fashion.

1. Teachers must convey a positive public image.
2. Teachers should behave as professionals.
3. The profession has to "get rid of the deadwood".
4. Universities and colleges must do a better job of preparing teachers.

While such issues as higher salaries and class size were shared, they did not dominate teachers' responses in the ways that the four major issues did. From the perspective of the teachers in this study, the profession does have the power within its ranks to make significant changes. If teachers, principals and teacher educators band together around these major issues, the teaching profession will be more highly respected.

CHAPTER THREE: CONCLUSION

This study is being completed during an especially vigorous and challenging time for educators. At this very moment in history the winds of educational change are stirring up the profession (e.g., Aldrich, 1983; Alexander, 1983; Cameron, 1983; Toch, 1983; Walton, 1983; White, 1983). Reports from *task forces and *commissions propose that outstanding teachers should be rewarded.

Within this historic context, the study explores with outstanding teachers their joys, their sorrows, their hopes and their dreams for the future. Results of the study provide a vital building block in the knowledge base essential to understanding the lives of outstanding contemporary teachers.

More descriptive research, however, is needed about outstanding teachers. Replication of this study should take place in other geographic locations within the country. Teachers in high schools, junior high schools and middle schools need to be identified and interviewed.

In short, the data base about outstanding teachers must be expanded so that a solid foundation of knowledge can be shared. From this pooled knowledge, new ways of identifying outstanding teachers will be developed as well as new roles and reward systems.

This concluding section does not signal an end of the study but, rather, a beginning. In addition to replicating the work, readers are encouraged to react to the present study. Questions, criticisms and in-

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* National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; National Task Force on Education for Economic Growth, 1983; Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Policy, 1983.

put are invited along with an indication of the position or role of the respondent.

Selected References

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

I. Did any person or experience influence your decision to become a teacher?

II. What was your student teaching experience like?

III. Is there any incident or event that you're especially proud of?

IV. Tell me about the approaches or techniques that work best for you in teaching.

V. What is the teacher's role in maintaining discipline?

VI. How would you describe yourself?

VII. How might your students describe you?

VIII. Are you able to balance your personal and professional life?

IX. What do you do for fun?

X. What situations are stressful for you?

XI. How do you deal with stress?

XII. Do you have a support network?

XIII. Do you feel appreciated?

XIV. What kind of person do you like to work for?

XV. If you could establish an ideal school, what would it be like?

XVI. If you had to do it all over again, would you be a teacher?

XVII. What are the characteristics of a person whom you feel is an outstanding teacher?

XVIII. What can be done to make teaching a more highly respected profession?

APPENDIX B: CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING TEACHERS

1. Conveys enthusiasm to others.
2. Is a good organizer and plans ahead.
3. Treats each student as a unique personality.
4. Has a positive attitude toward his/her profession.
5. Is a continual learner.
6. Develops effective working relationships with other adults (parents, teachers, administrators).
7. Does creative thinking in his/her area of professional responsibility.
8. Participates actively as a member of selected professional and educational organizations.

APPENDIX C: PROFILE INFORMATION

Please check ( ) one.

I. Age Range

26-30 _____	46-50 _____
31-35 _____	51-55 _____
36-40 _____	56-60 _____
41-45 _____	60 + _____

II. Years of Experience

5-9 _____	20-24 _____
10-14 _____	25-29 _____
15-19 _____	30 + _____

III. Education Background

Graduate Courses _____	Master's Degree _____
Post Master's Courses _____	Education Specialist _____
Doctorate _____	

IV. Grade Level and/or Subjects:

_____

V. Sex

Male _____ Female _____